



Four in 10 students binge drink regularly

Online survey: key findings

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Four out of 10 students at UCD "binge drink" at least once a week by consuming six or more drinks in one session, new research has indicated. More than one in 10 drink so much at least once a month that they are unable to remember what happened the night before, the research also states.

The survey of approximately 3,700 non-teetotal male and female students with an average age of 21 shows that one in three consumes alcohol more than once a week.

Amid increasing concerns about the impact of "binge drinking" on Irish young people, one-fifth said they consume between seven and nine alcoholic drinks during a typical day's drinking. Almost one in 10 said they consume 10 drinks or more.

The preliminary research indicates that high levels of drinking among students may not be noticed by relatives, friends, doctors or other healthcare workers. Only 13 per cent of those surveyed said such individuals had raised concerns about their drinking or suggested they cut down.

Four out of 10 students also said that during the last year they had failed to do what is normally expected of them - for example meeting deadlines - because of their drinking.

One in 10 said this occurred on a monthly basis, while a further 5 per cent said this happened on a weekly basis.

Half said they had feelings of remorse or guilt after drinking, with 13 per cent stating that this occurred on either a monthly or a weekly basis.

One quarter said they or someone else had been injured as a result of their drinking, while almost 50 per cent said that during the last year they had been unable to remember what happened the night before because they had been drinking.

When asked how often this happened, 10 per cent said this was a monthly occurrence, while 3 per cent said it occurred weekly.

Thirty per cent of those sur-

veyed said they had been unable to stop drinking once they had started at least once during the last year, with 5 per cent saying this happened once a week.

The online survey, conducted last March and April by UCD's Geary Institute and partly funded by drinks manufacturer Diageo Ireland, uses a standard World Health Organisation Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test to measure levels of alcohol use.

The survey, which forms part of a broader attempt to chart the effects of alcohol, is thought to be a representative sample of students at the college. Nearly all of the students surveyed - 96 per cent - said they had never needed a "first drink" in the morning after a heavy session the night before.

Dr Liam Delaney of the Geary Institute said the research only includes students who agreed to volunteer for the survey, adding that the issues raised at UCD would likely be replicated in colleges elsewhere. This is something the ongoing study intends to examine further.

■ 33 per cent of UCD students surveyed said they consume alcohol more than once a week. 32 per cent said they consume five or six alcoholic drinks on a typical day when drinking; 22 per cent said they consume seven to nine drinks; 8 per cent said they drink 10 or more.

■ 13 per cent said a relative, friend or doctor or other health worker had been concerned about their drinking or suggested they cut down.

■ 42 per cent said they had six or more drinks on one occasion at least once a week; 49 per cent said that during last year they had been unable to remember what happened the night before due to drinking.

■ 30 per cent said they were unable to stop drinking once they started at least once in the last year. 44 per cent said they had failed to do what is normally expected of them because of drinking.