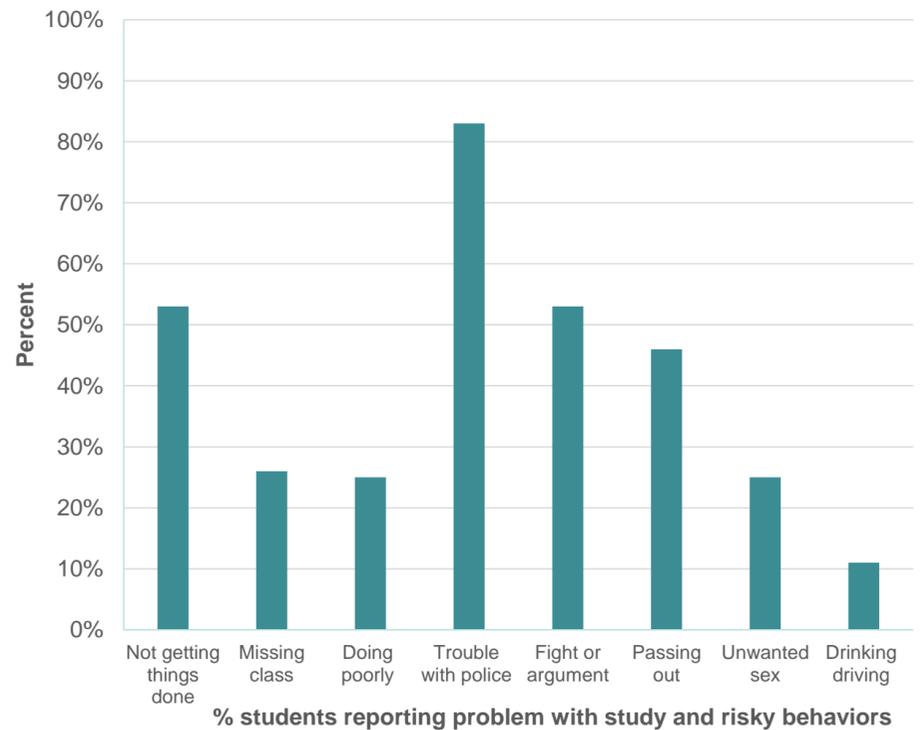
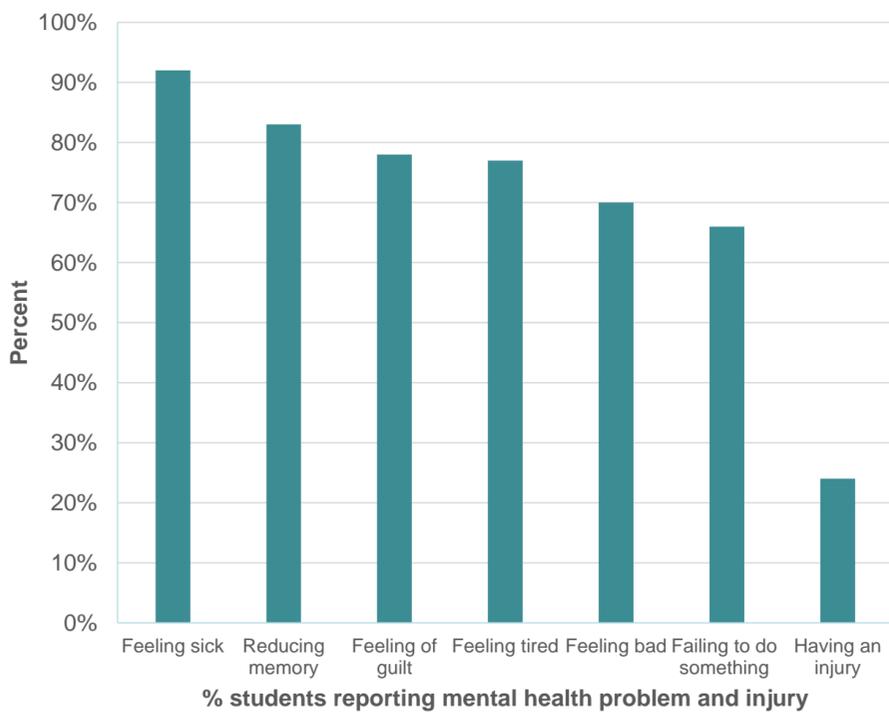


Drinking among high risk students receiving the brief alcohol screening and intervention in a U.S. Public University

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Introduction

Alcohol abuse in the collegiate population continues to be a significant problem. This study examined knowledge and experience of high risk students receiving the brief alcohol screening and intervention of college students (BASICS) with the negative effects of excessive drinking in a major U.S. public university.

Methods

Questionnaire-based interviews were administered to students prior to the BASICS session during 2016-2017 academic year. Data on students' demographics, frequency and amount of drinking, knowledge on the effects of alcohol use, experience with negative effects of excessive drinking, and their perceptions of alcohol use among college peers was descriptively analyzed.

Study participants

There were 122 students (75% males) visiting the BASICS clinic. The median age was 19 with 77% younger than 20 years of age. Freshmen accounted for 44% of the sample, followed by sophomore (27%). 43% were affiliated with a fraternity or sorority and 13% were the members of the athletic team. The median age of first time drinkers was 17 years.

Key findings

Nearly two thirds (61%) of students reported frequently drinking alcohol and 55% reported frequently having ≥ 6 drinks on one occasion. Nearly half reported having 3 or 4 alcoholic drinks on a typical day when drinking. On average, male and female students estimated that 14% and 5% ($p < 0.05$), respectively, of their peers of the same gender drink more.

Key findings (Cont.)

Over 70% of students understood the consequences of mixing alcohol with other beverages, as well as, the effects of alcohol use for muscle building purposes.

On a 0-4 point scales estimating frequency, 61% of students reported having a drink containing alcohol and 55% reported having ≥ 6 drinks on one occasion at a frequency of 3 or 4. Nearly half reported having 3 or 4 drinks containing alcohol on a typical day when they are drinking. On average, male and female students estimated that 14% and 5% ($p < 0.05$), respectively, of their peers of the same gender drink more than they do.

Many students reported a mental health problem including failing to do something (66%), feeling of guilt (78%), reduced memory (83%), and feeling bad (70%). Furthermore, 92% ever felt sick, 77% ever felt tired, and 24% ever had an injury. A significant proportion of students reported problems with study: 25% doing poorly on the test, 53% not getting things done, and 26% missing class. A great proportion of them reported risky behavior under the influence of alcohol use: 83% - getting into trouble with police, 53% - getting onto fight or argument, 46% - passing out, 25% - unwanted sex, and 11% - drinking driving. Students also reported having problems with family (30%) and partners (27%).

Conclusion

Most students demonstrated correct understanding of the effects of alcohol and many of them reported negative consequences of alcohol use on their physical and mental health, study, relationship, and risky behavior. Such findings collectively indicate that these students are at higher risk of risky drinking and timely referral of these students to BASICS could help mitigate the risk.

