

Relationship between Binge Drinking Frequency and Diet among College Students

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The purpose of this project is to examine binge drinking habits among college students and its relationship to diet quality. It is hypothesized that greater binge drinking frequency is related to a lower diet score. Data were collected between 2005-15; students (n=6,353), ages 18-24, were recruited to participate in an ongoing, health survey. Binge drinking frequency, defined as consuming ≥ 4 or 5 drinks on occasion for women or men respectively, from the past month, was self-reported via online questionnaire. Three-day food records were used to evaluate nutrient intake and analyzed via online software (DietAnalysis Plus). Diet quality was quantified by scoring intakes of saturated fat, fiber, potassium, and calcium. Intakes were divided into quintiles and scored 1-5 with increasing intake; saturated fat was inversely scored. Higher diet scores (range 4-20) represented better diet quality. Among men (n=1,732), 32.7% reported weekly binge drinking, and 33.7% reported binge drinking more than once/week. Among women (n=4,621), 33.8% reported binge drinking weekly, and 16.8% reported binge drinking more than once/week. Findings support the current hypothesis and demonstrate a relationship between higher binge drinking frequency and lower diet quality among students at a northeastern university. As increased alcohol consumption and poor dietary quality are linked to weight gain and cardiovascular disease risk, findings hold importance to campus health professionals.