

# Intensity of daily drinking and its relation to alcohol use disorders.

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## Abstract

## Background

Daily drinking is an important public health concern and informative for evaluating diagnostic classification. In particular, daily binge drinkers might be considered as the prototype of some forms of alcoholism, as this drinking pattern may drive many alcohol use disorder (AUD) symptoms. However, daily drinking potentially captures a wide range of drinkers, including light–moderate daily drinkers who exhibit presumed control over their drinking behavior and might benefit from salutary effects on health. This study examined the heterogeneity of daily drinkers in detail.

## Methods

Data from the 2 waves of the National Epidemiologic Survey on Alcohol and Related Conditions were used. Participants who reported drinking “every day” during the last 12 months were classified as daily drinkers. A series of regression and logistic regression analyses were conducted to investigate the association between daily drinking and various outcomes.

## Results

Daily drinkers were found to vary considerably from each other with respect to diagnostic status, level of consumption, demographic composition, and a range of drinking and health correlates. Further, a substantial number of daily binge drinkers were not diagnosed with AUD under the DSM-IV or DSM-5, although in most groups, the DSM-5 criteria diagnosed a larger percentage of participants.

## Conclusions

Daily drinkers represent a highly heterogeneous group, and the correlates of daily drinking depend on the usual quantity of daily drinks and the frequency of alcohol-related problems in a given sample. Moreover, AUD, defined both according to DSM-IV and DSM-5, did not capture more than 68% of daily binge drinkers. Given that daily binge drinking is an extremely high threshold for use, this finding may present a challenge for our current classification system.