

New York Emergency Room Visits Related to Drinking on the Rise



The number of visits to New York public hospital emergency rooms that are related to drinking shot up from almost 8,000 to 15,620 in five years, the New York Daily News reports.

Drinking is now the fifth-leading cause of emergency room visits at public hospitals, according to the newspaper. Teenage binge drinking is one of the main drivers behind the increase.

"I certainly see really young people who drank enormous amounts of alcohol and have bad withdrawal," Dr. Christopher McStay of Bellevue Hospital's Emergency Department said. A \$200,000 ad campaign launched by the city in 2011, warning about alcohol abuse, seems to have had little effect on hospital visits, the article notes.

At Bellevue, the number of alcohol-impaired patients coming to the ER rose by 191 percent, from 1,659 in 2007, to 4,844 last year. The majority of these patients have cuts or broken bones, while some need their stomachs pumped. Many of the patients are minors, according to hospital staff. The hospital currently has 50 patients enrolled in a program for repeat offenders. They receive added psychiatric care. Almost 2,000 people were admitted to the hospital's detox center last year.