NCADD
NATIONAL COUNCIL ON ALCOHOLISM AND DRUG DEPENDENCE, INC.

Nearly Two-Thirds of U.S. Adults Are Current Drinkers

Nearly two-thirds (65 percent) of U.S. adults are current drinkers, according to recently released data from the National Health Interview Survey (NHIS).

The majority of these current drinkers were infrequent (11 drinks or less in the past year) or light (3 drinks or less per week) drinkers.

Around one-fourth were moderate drinkers and eight percent were heavier drinkers*

Men were more likely than women to not only be current drinkers (71 vs. 60 percent), but also to be moderate or heavier current drinkers (29 vs. 13 percent).

Alcohol is the most commonly used addictive substance in the United States- 17.6 million people, or one in every 12 adults, suffer from alcohol abuse or dependence along with several million more who engage in risky, binge drinking patterns that could lead to alcohol problems. More than half of all adults have a family history of alcoholism or problem drinking, and more than 7 million children live in a household where at least one parent is dependent on or has abused alcohol. Click here to learn more.

*Data are annual averages from the 2008 to 2010 National Health Interview Survey (NHIS), a survey of the U.S. civilian noninstitutionalized population collected using computer-assisted personal interviews of adults aged 18 years and older. Lifetime Abstainer: had fewer than 12 drinks in entire lifetime; Former Infrequent Drinker: had 12 drinks or more in lifetime, but never as many as 12 drinks in a single year, and had no drinks in the past year; Former Regular Drinker: had 12 drinks or more in one year, but no drinks in the past year; Current Drinker: had at least 12 drinks in lifetime and at least 1 drink in the past year; Infrequent Drinker: had at least 12 drinks in lifetime and 1-11 drinks in past year; Light Drinker: had 3 drinks or less per week, on average, in the past year; Moderate Drinker: had more than 3 and up to and including 14 drinks per week for men, and more than 3 and up to and including 7 drinks per week for women, on average, in the past year; Heavier Drinker: had more than 14 drinks per week for men and more than 7 drinks per week for women, on average, in the past year.

SOURCE: Adapted by CESAR from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), National Center for Health Statistics, Health Behaviors of Adults: United States, 2008-2010, 2013.