

How many American adults (ages 18 and older) drank during the past year and how much did they drink?

women	men	
Percentage who had at least one drink	59.6%	71.8%
Percentage who have never drank — lifetime abstainers	22.5%	11.6%
Percentage of binge drinkers — drinkers who consumed 4+ (women) or 5+ (men) drinks within 2 hours at least once	28.8%	43.1%

*according to www.niaaa.nih.gov

How many drinks did drinkers usually consume during a drinking day?

women	men	
3 or more drinks	21.9%	42.3%
2 drinks	29.9%	29.0%
1 drink	48.2%	28.7%

Women are criticized unfairly



John Riti

Eds: Story includes profanity

Let's talk about twerking and teddy bears. Miley Cyrus created a media firestorm during her controversial Aug. 25 MTV Video Music Awards performance. However, the public response and social ramifications of Cyrus' actions speak to a larger issue that warrants discussion.

If you missed it, a scantily-clad Cyrus performed her song "We Can't Stop" with back up dancers dressed as huge teddy bears, along with a lot of sexual and provocative dance moves. Accompanied by Robin Thicke, Cyrus later transitioned into Thicke's song "Blurred Lines" — much more scandalous dancing ensued.

The response to Cyrus' performance shows America still has a "slut-shaming" mindset — that is, we disproportionately shame or condemn females for "unethical" or overtly provocative behavior.

Disregard whether or not the performance had any artistic merit or whether Cyrus sang well. The public eruption throughout media and social networks shows how in American society today females receive the brunt of accusations for things deemed immoral or shocking. We react to unexpected displays such as Cyrus' with nothing but insults and nasty comments, but similar displays that come from men often pass by with little to no controversy.

For the record, I'm not advocating Cyrus' performance or deeming it quality entertainment. But consider this — Thicke's "Blurred Lines" is a song about sexual consent and "giving in" to the male allure. It contains lyrics such as "the way you grab me, must wanna get nasty" and "you the hottest bitch in this place."

Thicke was onstage with Cyrus that night dancing right along with her, yet no one seems outraged with him. In fact, during a May 7 interview with "GQ" magazine — a publication with a predominately male readership — Thicke said in making the accompanying music video for the song, "we tried to do everything that was taboo... everything that is completely derogatory towards women" with the intent to make fun of the issue. His "humorous" intentions fall flat in my eyes.

This gendered double standard is not a new phenomenon, and is so deeply rooted in our culture that even our language is reflective of it. A study of North American English conducted during 1977 — taken from McKay and Hornberger's Sociolinguistics and Language Teaching — pinpointed 220 words used to identify a promiscuous woman, but only 20 for a promiscuous man.

Consider the words "slut" and "stud." When I hear someone use the word "slut," it has a negative connotation. A girl who sleeps around a lot is viewed unfavorably. Conversely, when I hear the male equivalent "stud," it has a positive connotation. Promiscuous and "studly" men are seen as cool and idolized by the entertainment industry.

Think of the character Barney Stinson on the TV comedy "How I Met Your Mother." As the show's most popular character, his characterization is completely centered on the fact that he sleeps with a lot of women. I'd be willing to bet that if a female equivalent of Barney Stinson ever surfaced on primetime TV, she'd be met by far fewer laughs and much more criticism.

On a cultural level, we have become so accustomed to men expressing themselves with openly sexual terms that we don't bat an eyelash when they do so, yet when a young woman does the same we react with shock and detestation. If you're offended by Miley Cyrus, you should be just as offended by Robin Thicke. When our culture has accepted lewd behavior, offensive language and sexual objectification for so long, we have no right to act surprised when a young performer feels the need to follow suit. Perhaps we're all the ones at fault.

John Riti is a senior English major from St. Louis, Mo.

Don't trivialize alcoholism



Andrea Trierweiler

My uncle dreamed of riding his motorcycle through all 50 states and Trierweiler, Germany. If he hadn't died of liver failure caused by alcoholism at age 54, he might have had a chance to do so.

I've heard too many people say, "You can't be an alcoholic in college." They say anyone who drinks heavily has a "drinking problem" and laugh off the matter. But alcoholism is not a joke — it's a serious disease, and trivializing it is dangerous.

Alcohol abuse is "having unhealthy or dangerous drinking habits, such as drinking every day or drinking too much at a time," and can lead to alcoholism, also known as alcohol dependence, according to WebMD. While heavy drinking often is seen as a staple of American college culture, college students are not immune to the potential long-term health issues alcohol abuse can cause. These include strokes, amnesia, hypertension or pancreatitis, according to WebMD. In fact,

because drinking is so ingrained in college culture, there is even more reason to take it seriously.

Brushing off a college student's alcohol abuse or dependency as "just a drinking problem" creates a stigma. It sends the message that it's okay to drink heavily during college years as long as you kick the habit upon graduation. College students who think they might be developing alcoholism might be afraid to seek help because they fear ridicule from peers who see heavy drinking as a normal activity, not an issue that needs addressing.

The truth is, it is possible to become an alcoholic during college. According to the Alcoholism Statistics website, 6 percent of college students are considered alcohol-dependent. Furthermore, alcohol causes 20 to 30 percent of liver and esophageal cancer, and alcohol abuse or dependency affects 15 million people in the U.S., according to Alcoholism Statistics.

But if the statistics aren't convincing, I'll offer a personal story. My father struggled with alcoholism and if he hadn't quit drinking during 1990, he said his life probably would have taken a bad turn and I never would have been born.

My uncle wasn't as fortunate. I was 14 when my family got the news — his liver was failing because of his alcohol addiction. For the next six months, we had to watch his condition worsen as he was moved in and out of hospitals and nursing homes, gradually losing the ability to take care of himself

until he passed away. What my uncle went through and the stress my family endured during the months of his illness is an experience I would not wish on my worst enemy.

Please understand how serious the nature of alcohol dependency is. I'm not saying college students should never drink. I'm not saying drinking alcohol is wrong. I'm not going to preach about the dangers of alcohol because we've had those speeches forced upon us through years of schooling. I'm just asking people to consider binge drinking and alcoholism as serious matters despite the college drinking culture. If a friend or family member might have a problem, encourage them to get help so they don't risk losing their life like my uncle did.

As college students, we're at Truman State for a purpose — to move closer to our life goals. We didn't come here to develop a disease that will prevent us from meeting those goals. We must take binge drinking seriously and stop embracing it as part of college culture, because people should not miss their chance to travel to Germany, bike around the country or fulfill whatever life goals they have.

Andrea Trierweiler is a junior Romance language major from Columbia, Mo.

Do you drink coffee? If so, what kind and how often?

"I do when I'm at school ... I mostly drink what I can get from Jazzman's."

Rachel Heinrich
sophomore

"I drink coffee maybe once per week. I like iced light chocolate mochas."

Maddy Dobbie
freshman

"I drink it about three times a week. I like Starbucks' roast."

Rosie Linhares
freshman

"I don't drink coffee, I drink tea. I just don't have a taste for coffee — I get the jitters."

Jesse Westhoff
junior



AROUND THE QUAD

It's not a shame to love a morning brew



Conor Gearin

There seem to be two types of Truman State students, at least among my acquaintances — those addicted to coffee and those that soon will be addicted to coffee.

There are some who declare themselves disgusted by the taste of coffee, or as tea-drinkers. But in such a coffee culture who could long persist in refusing the dark brew? Kirksville's new Starbucks will offer students even more caffeinated options.

Yet many who drink coffee, myself included, are ashamed of their habit to varying degrees.

They feel caffeine dependence harms their self-reliance. However, I would suggest worrying about your coffee intake is not worth it.

I came to Truman determined not to begin drinking coffee regularly. To the astonishment of none, by sophomore year, black tea was no longer enough for my relentless schedule. I began to discover coffee's surprising effects — the brief window of immense, impatient energy, the desire to listen to fast-paced galante-style classical music, particularly that of Luigi Boccherini, the inevitable crash a couple hours later, and the accompanying dull stupor and crossness.

I then became curious about others' coffee habits and brewing methods. I observed a few prominent types — those who claim to drink coffee but in fact solely drink "Frappuccinos" and such sugary mixtures will not form part of this discussion.

Going from lowest intake to

highest, we begin with the one-cuppers. I fall into this category. These students have a Keurig-type one-cup coffee maker or small coffee pot, and usually stick to just a cup or two during the morning to tackle a long lecture. They are wary of the effects of more than a single mug, and often still feel guilty about their need for it.

After the one-cuppers, there are the serial coffee-drinkers. Unlike me, the caffeine crash doesn't make them not want coffee, but instead causes them to drink even more. Having caffeine at night does not cause them insomnia. Still, they have their limits, and often drink slowly and steadily instead of guzzling. These students usually like the taste of coffee, unlike some of the one-cuppers.

Finally, there are the straight espresso drinkers, the entire-pot-gulpers and those who drink those mysterious alchemical coffee-espresso concoctions

known as Red Eyes and Black Eyes. These coffee lovers are unapologetic of their caffeine intake. Last semester, I watched a student walk up to the Jazzman's counter in the Student Union Building as I waited for a cappuccino. He asked the barista how many espresso shots he could buy at once, and walked away with a cup full of a very dark brew.

Jazzman's barista Teresa Rehm said the Supreme Americano has the most espresso of any of their products, with four shots of espresso.

For some, such strong coffee is not only enjoyable, it has become a requirement.

Senior Amy Soto said she studied abroad in Spain, which has an espresso-drinking culture. She said after returning she no longer could stomach America's comparatively weak drip-brewed coffee.

"I couldn't stand the brown water anymore," Soto said. She said she now uses a

European-style moka pot, which makes several shots of espresso-like coffee and, when combined with microwave-heated milk, can be used to make a quick latte.

Even while aware of such espresso-heads, the one-cup drinkers persist in worrying about their meager servings. Yet for all our fuss, the worn-out epithet "First World Problems" makes light of our tragedy.

My mother's judgment was more generous — "If coffee is your worst vice, then you're doing okay."

I guess if coffee is not your worst vice, you should focus on getting rid of those other vices first. But if coffee will help you stay alert and keep up with the news, homework and life's plethora of challenges, then bottoms up.

Conor Gearin is a senior biology and English major from St. Louis, Mo.