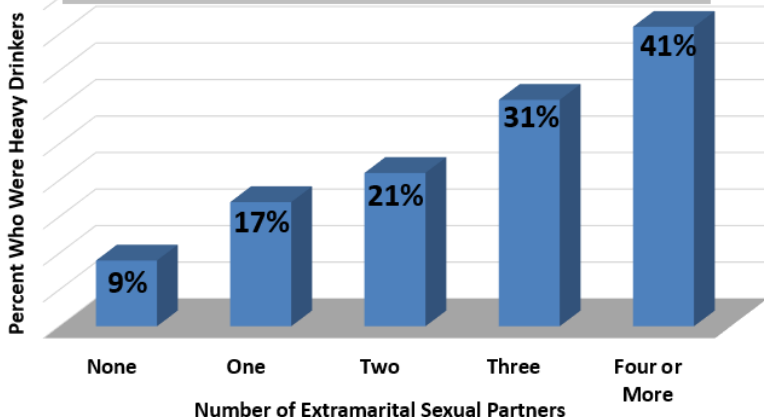


Heavy Drinking Among Adults

By Number of Extramarital Sexual Partners and Religious Practice

Heavy Drinking Among Adults

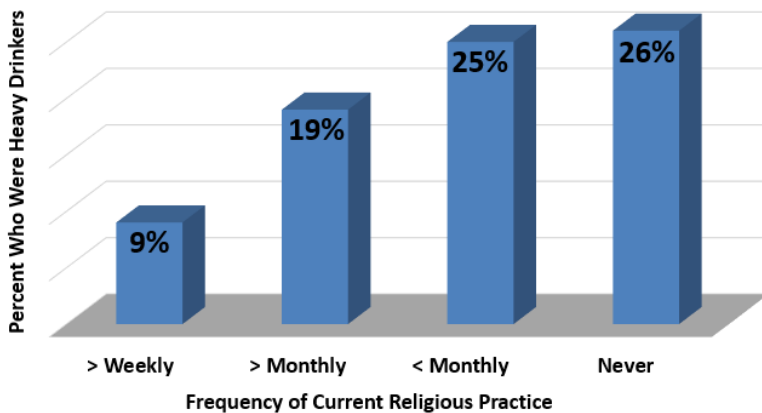
By Number of Extramarital Sexual Partners



Source: National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1979 and Child and Young Adult Survey 1994-2008 (Ages 18+)

Heavy Drinking Among Adults

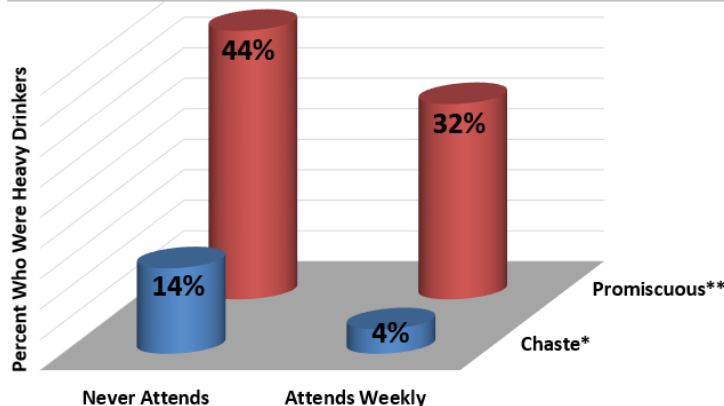
By Religious Practice



Source: National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1979 and Child and Young Adult Survey 1994-2008 (Ages 18+)

Heavy Drinking Among Adults

By Number of Extramarital Sexual Partners and Religious Practice



Source: National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1979 and Child and Young Adult Survey 1994-2008 (Ages 18+)

This chart looks at likelihood to drink heavily at the extremes of four demographic quadrants.

These four quadrants are derived from combining two sets of sexual habits (chaste vs. promiscuous**) and two sets of religious attendance (weekly vs. never).*

The families occupying the four corners (or four extremes) of these quadrants are:

- The chaste* person that worships weekly;*
- The chaste* person that never worships;*
- The promiscuous* person that worships weekly;*
- The promiscuous* person that never worships.*

*(*No non-marital sexual partners during the survey year.)
(**Four or more non-marital sexual partners during the survey year.)*

Heavy Drinking Among Adults by Number of Extramarital Sexual Partners and Religious Practice

Heavy drinking, multiple sexual partners and avoidance of worship tend to go together: the 1979 National Longitudinal Survey of Youth shows that adults who have had no extramarital sexual partners in the previous year and worshipped at least weekly at the time of the survey were less likely to be heavy drinkers.

Number of Extramarital Sexual Partners: Only 9 percent of adults who had no extramarital sexual partners (were chaste) were heavy drinkers, compared with 17 percent of adults who had one extramarital sexual partner. These adults were followed by 21 percent of adults who had 2 extramarital sexual partners, 31 percent who had three extramarital sexual partners, and 41 percent of adults who had four or more extramarital sexual partners.

Religious Practice: Only 9 percent of adults who attended weekly religious services were heavy drinkers, compared with 19 percent of adults who attended church at least monthly. Among adults who attended church less than once a month, 25 percent were heavy drinkers, followed by adults who had no religious attendance (26 percent).

Number of Extramarital Sexual Partners and Religious Practice Combined: Only 4 percent of chaste adults who worshipped weekly were heavy drinkers, followed by 14 percent of individuals who never attended church, but had no extramarital sexual partners. Thirty-two percent of adults who attended church but were promiscuous were heavy drinkers, followed by adults who were not chaste and who never attended church (44 percent).

Related Insights from Other Studies: Other studies show relationships between sexual activity and drinking. A 1990 random digit-dial telephone survey done of 16- to 19-year-olds in Massachusetts found that 64 percent of teenagers who reported having sexual intercourse did so after drinking and 15 percent did so after other drug use. Forty-nine percent of teenagers were more likely to have sex if they and their partner had been drinking.¹

Additionally, another study found that drinking at an early age was associated with alcohol and sexual risks through mid-adolescence; early drinkers were more likely to report later alcohol problems, as well as multiple sexual partners and being drunk or high during sexual intercourse. Among females, early drinking was also related to sexual initiation and recent sexual intercourse.²

Religious practice also affects alcohol use. One study found that among college students those, who were from “Gentile” religious traditions (as opposed to “Jewish” religious traditions), those

¹Lee Strunin and Ralph Hingson, “Alcohol, Drugs, and Adolescent Sexual Behavior,” *Substance Use & Misuse* 27, no. 2 (1992): 129-146.

²Ann Stueve and Lydia N. O’Donnell, “Early Alcohol Initiation and Subsequent Sexual and Alcohol Risk Behaviors Among Urban Youths,” *American Journal of Public Health* 95, no. 5 (May 2005): 887-893.

who were not strongly attached to a particular faith, and those who had parents who were alcohol abusers were more likely to abuse alcohol. This same study found that parental religious affiliation influenced the alcohol choices made by their children, with greater parental religiosity leading to less alcohol abuse by the children.³ Another study of college students also found that students with no religious affiliation drank significantly more and more frequently, got drunk more, drank more for celebration purposes, and had greater perceived drinking norms.⁴

Patrick F. Fagan, Ph.D.

Patrick Fagan is the Director of the Marriage and Religion Research Institute

Scott Talkington, Ph.D.

Scott Talkington has been Research Director for the National Association of Scholars and Senior Research Fellow at George Mason University School of Public Policy since 1998.

³ H. Wesley Perkins, "Parental Religion and Alcohol Use Problems as Intergenerational Predictors of Problem Drinking among College Youth," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 26, no. 3 (September 1987): 340-357.

⁴ Julie A. Patock-Peckham, Geoffrey T. Hutchinson, Jeewon Cheong, and Craig T. Nagoshi, "Effect of religion and religiosity on alcohol use in a college student sample," *Journal of Drug and Alcohol Dependence* 49, no. 2 (January 1998): 81-88.