

# Student Alcohol Consumption Increases During Pandemic

*Student alcohol use increases following campus closures due to pandemic, and increased alcohol use associated with higher levels of depression and anxiety.*

KENT, OHIO, UNITED STATES, November 19, 2020 /EINPresswire.com/ -- While it's no secret that



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*William Lechner*

many college students drink alcohol, how COVID-19 affected these behaviors and patterns is the focus of recent research published in [Addictive Behaviors](#) by [Kent State University's](#) William Lechner, Ph.D., assistant professor in the Department of Psychological Sciences, and Deric Kenne, Ph.D., associate director in the [Center for Public Policy and Health](#) and associate professor in the College of Public Health.

As colleges nationwide began shutting down their campuses, Lechner decided to study the effects that a major stressor such as the pandemic could have on addictive behaviors. Lechner also wanted to unpack how vulnerabilities such as anxiety and depression played a part in the coping process of college students.

A survey was sent out to Kent State undergraduate, graduate, and med school students and consisted of a questionnaire focused on drinking and lifestyle patterns.

“As long as they were enrolled as a student for the Spring 2020 Semester, they were included in the recruitment process,” said Lechner.

The researchers had a 12.8% response rate to the survey, and of the 4,276 student respondents, the mean age was 24.4 and nearly 80% were female and 86% were white.

Not surprisingly, Lechner and Kenne’s findings supported their initial hypothesis.

“We believed going into this that drinking would have increased in college students due to COVID-19. We also believed that those with vulnerabilities would be more susceptible to the temptation of alcohol consumption,” said Lechner.

Lechner and Kenne were further able to identify vulnerabilities such as depression and anxiety

that were associated with increased drinking.

As explained in their article, "Changes in alcohol use as a function of psychological distress and social support following COVID-19-related university closings," increasing mental health service awareness available to individuals and families affected by disorders can be potentially very beneficial.

"We found that even those with a good support system were still at risk of increased drinking," said Lechner.

To continue examining the effects of COVID-19 on college students' drinking patterns and addictive behaviors, Lechner and Kenne are conducting a follow up analysis concerning problematic drinking behaviors.

The researchers hope to better understand how a major life stressor brought from the pandemic leads to problematic drinking. Finding these links will aid in developing intervention strategies to reduce problem drinking and its negative physical and mental effects.

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