

How Has Drinking Behavior Changed During the COVID-19 Pandemic?

Carolina Barbosa, PharmD, PhD

Alexander J. Cowell, PhD

William N. Dowd, BA



Research Team



Carolina Barbosa,
PharmD, PhD



Alexander J. Cowell,
PhD



William N. Dowd,
BA

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Alcohol Consumption and Related Harms



Alcohol consumption in the U.S.

About 70%

of the U.S. population aged 18 or older consumed alcohol in 2018, and more than half drank alcohol in the past 30 days.

About 27%

of the adult population reported binge drinking in the past month.

Excessive Alcohol Use: the Toll on Society



More than 200 diseases and injury-related health conditions



A 62% increase in Emergency Department visits between 2006 and 2014. A particularly large increase among females



88,000 annual deaths → fourth-leading preventable cause of death



Societal costs of nearly \$250 billion in 2010

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Policies to contain the COVID-19 Pandemic

Policies to Limit the Spread of COVID-19



44 states + DC enacted stay-at-home orders.



All states closed bars, most restricted dine-in service at restaurants and relaxed off-premise restrictions, and many allowed mixed drinks to go.

Source: <https://www.kff.org/coronavirus-covid-19/issue-brief/state-data-and-policy-actions-to-address-coronavirus/>;
<https://www.nabca.org/covid-19-resources>



The background of the slide is a solid blue color. It is decorated with several white, stylized icons of viruses or microorganisms. These icons are scattered across the top half of the slide, with some appearing larger and more detailed than others. The icons consist of a central circle with several smaller circles or protrusions around it, resembling a simplified representation of a virus particle.

What Do We Know About Drinking During the Pandemic in the U.S.?

Changes in Alcohol Sales in the US

How The COVID-19 Pandemic Is Upending The Alcoholic Beverage Industry



Joseph V Micallef Contributor
Spirits

I write about wines and spirits and the hidden corners of the world

REBALANCING THE 'COVID-19 EFFECT' ON ALCOHOL SALES

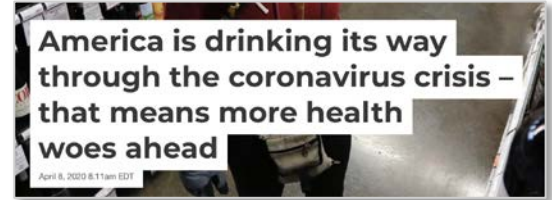
Coronavirus brings quick changes to state alcohol laws

Nielsen Says Beverage Alcohol Retail Sales Are Soaring During The Crisis

Alcohol sales surge during pandemic, lockdowns. Here's what people are drinking

eCommerce drives triple-digit growth in alcohol sales

Alcohol sales jump 234 percent during COVID-19



Alcohol Sales Are Not Spiking Or Even Stabilizing. Here's Why The Misconception Matters.

Coronavirus: How the pandemic is relaxing US drinking laws

By Marianna Brady
BBC News, Washington

© 15 May 2020

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Anecdotal! Consumption in the U.S.



America is drinking its way through the coronavirus crisis – that means more health woes ahead

April 8, 2020 8:11am EDT

 Alcohol Memes
@AlcoholMemes

Half of us are gonna come out of the quarantine as amazing cooks and the other half is gonna come out with a drinking problem. There is no in between

Travel around the world during Zoom happy hours with these global drinking traditions

'Quarantinis' and beer chugs: Is the pandemic driving us to drink?

Alcohol sales have soared as people use drinking to relax during the Covid-19 crisis, and experts are raising concerns


Happy Hours: More People Drinking While Working from Home During COVID-19

COMMENTARY

What Past Disasters Tell Us About COVID-19 and Substance Abuse

'More Zoom Parties, More Alcohol Consumption': Hard Seltzer, Tequila Sales Boom During COVID-19 Lockdown

STRESS DRINKING: ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION INCREASES DURING COVID-19

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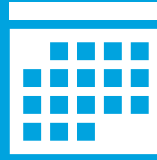
The RTI Survey on Alcohol Consumption During the COVID-19 Pandemic

The Survey



What?

Web-based survey
using Ipsos'
KnowledgePanel
Academic Omni



When?

May 8–15



How?

We asked about the following in
February and April:

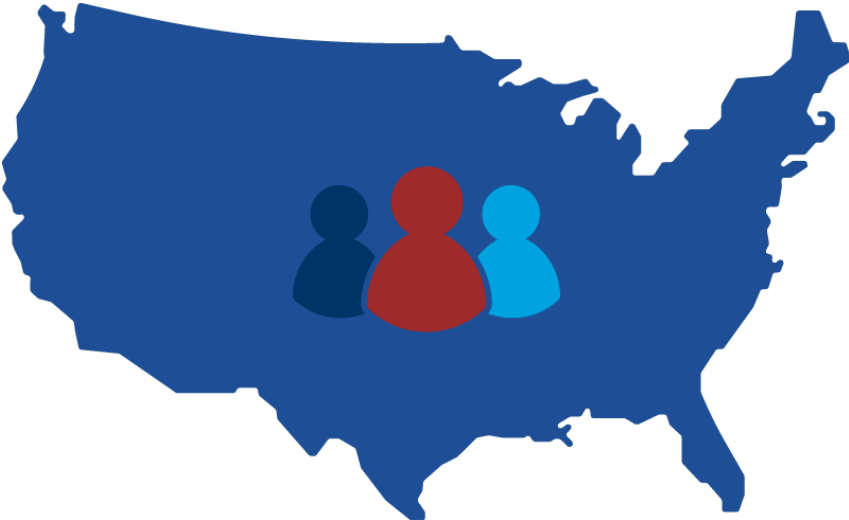
- Alcohol consumption
- Mental health
- Employment status

Plus:

- Lifetime alcohol experiences

Survey Respondents

993 Surveyed
555 Reported Drinking in February



Female: **52%**
Male: **48%**



21–34: **25%**
35–49: **25%**
50–64: **30%**
65+: **20%**



White, non-Hispanic: **66%**
Black, non-Hispanic: **9%**
Other, non-Hispanic: **7%**
Hispanic: **19%**



Northeast: **22%**
South: **30%**
West: **24%**
Midwest: **24%**

Analysis

- Compared February and April consumption
 - Used regression methods to adjust for gender, age, race, and other factors
- Examined alcohol consumption changes overall and by subgroups



The background of the slide features several stylized, light blue virus-like icons. These icons consist of a central circle with a smaller inner circle, surrounded by several protruding, rounded rectangular shapes that resemble spikes or tentacles. The icons are scattered across the top half of the slide, with some partially cut off by the edges.

Survey Results

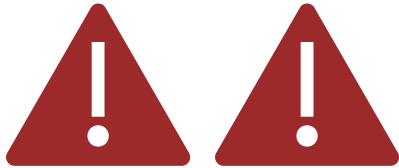
Three Main Drinking Outcomes in This Presentation



Average drinks per day



Percentage of people exceeding drinking guidelines



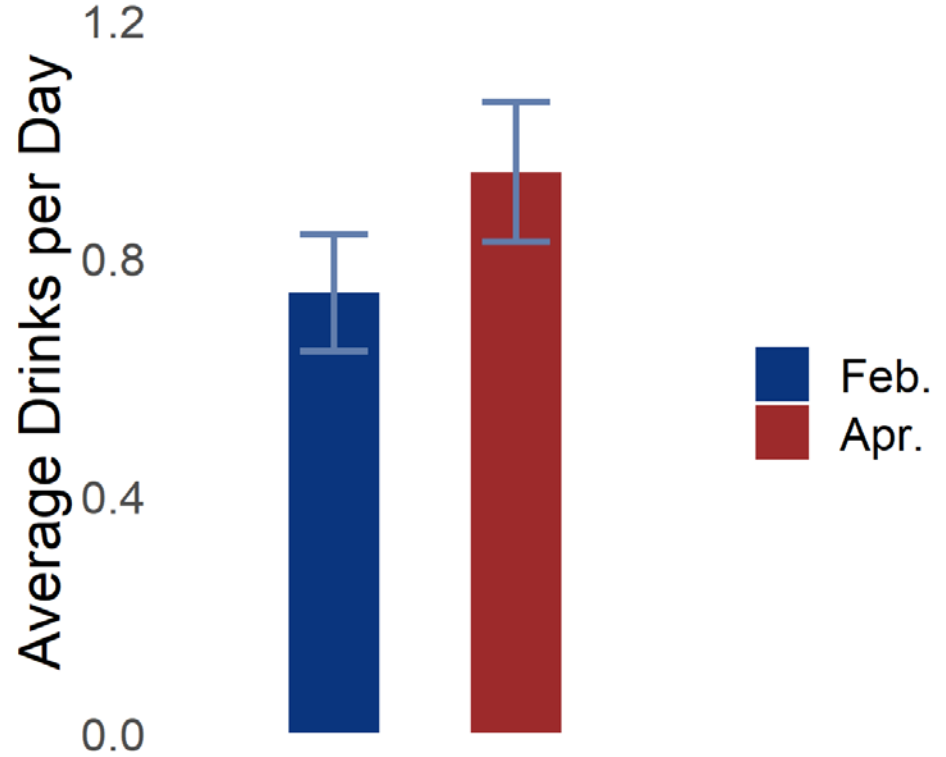
Percentage of people binge drinking

Average Drinks per Day

February: 0.74 drinks per day

April: 0.94 drinks per day

Result: +27%, $p < 0.001$

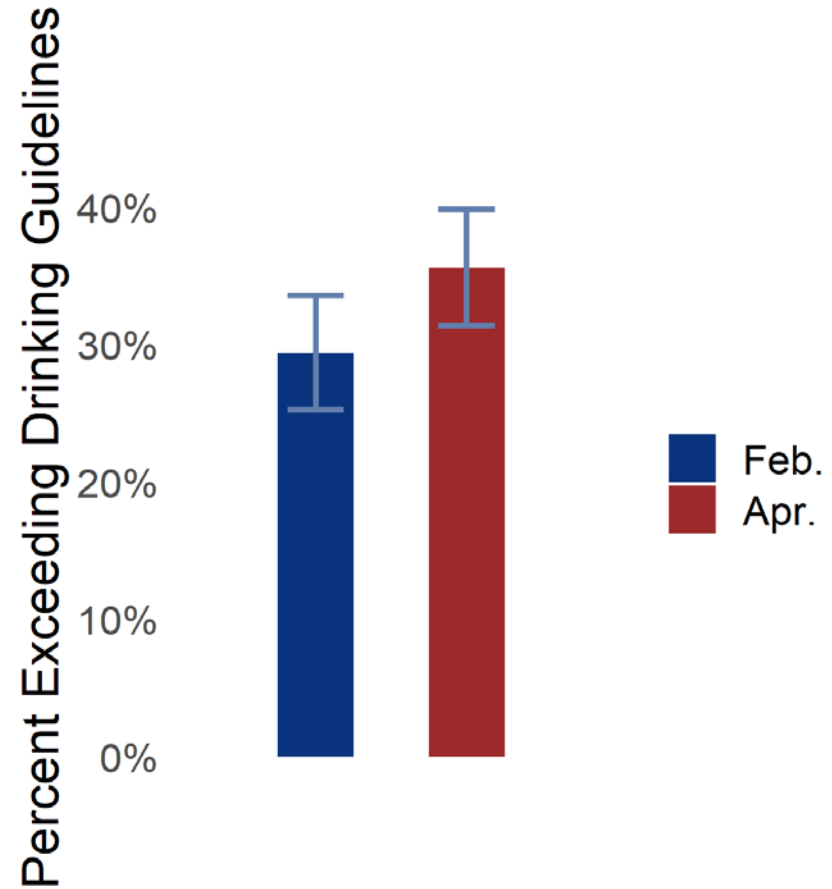


Exceeding Drinking Guidelines

February: 29%

April: 36%

Result: +21%, $p < 0.001$

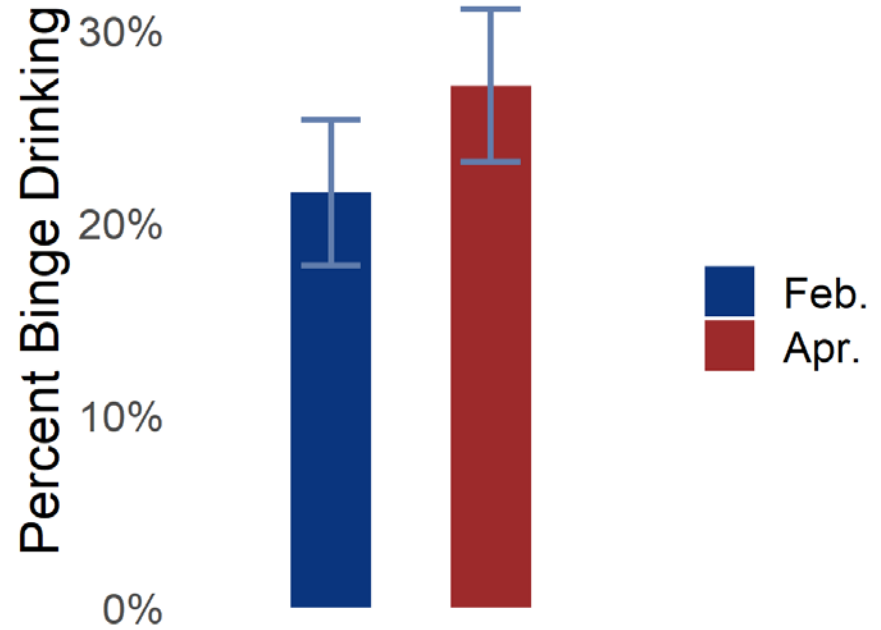


Binge Drinking

February: 22%

April: 27%

Result: +26%, $p=0.001$

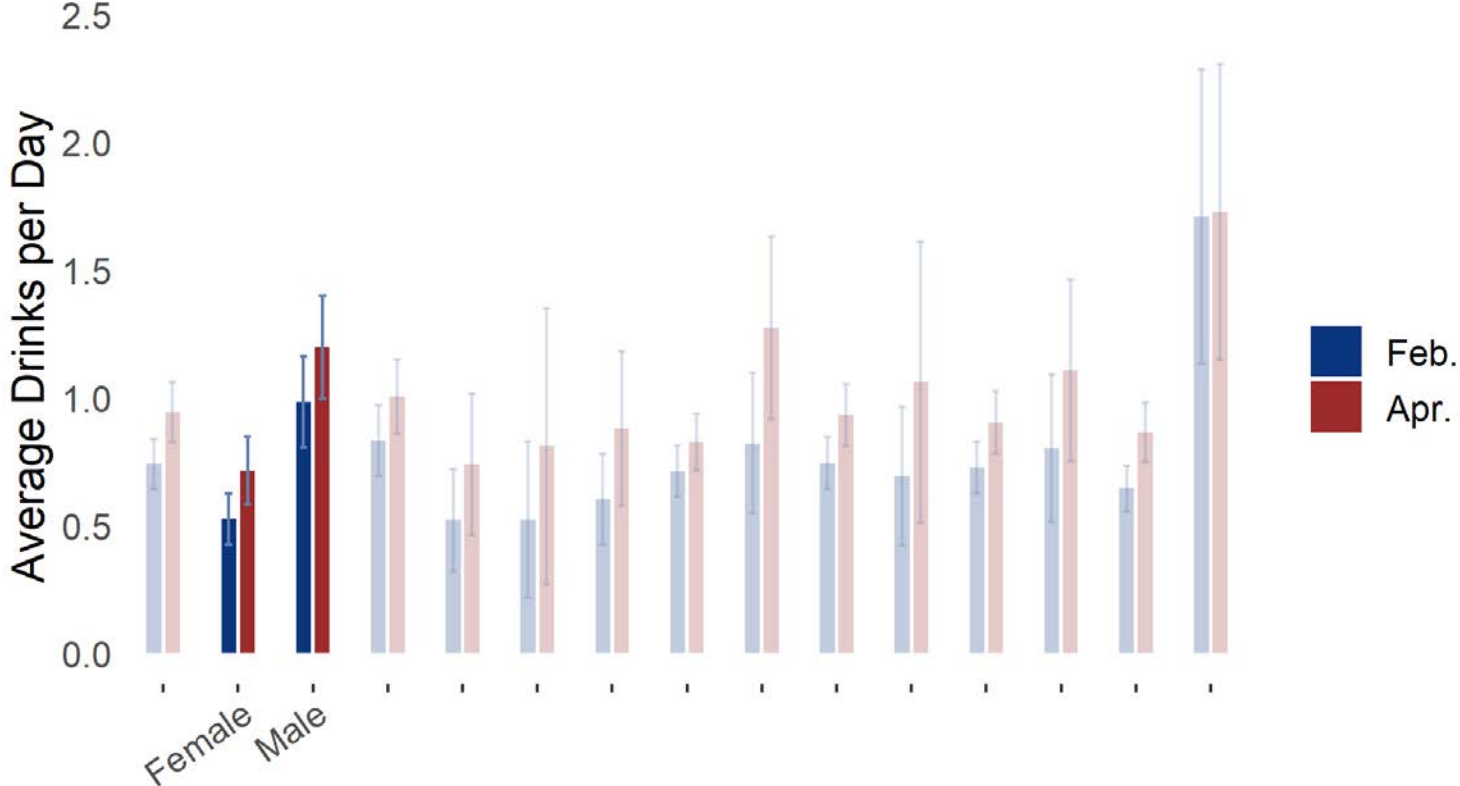




Stratified Results

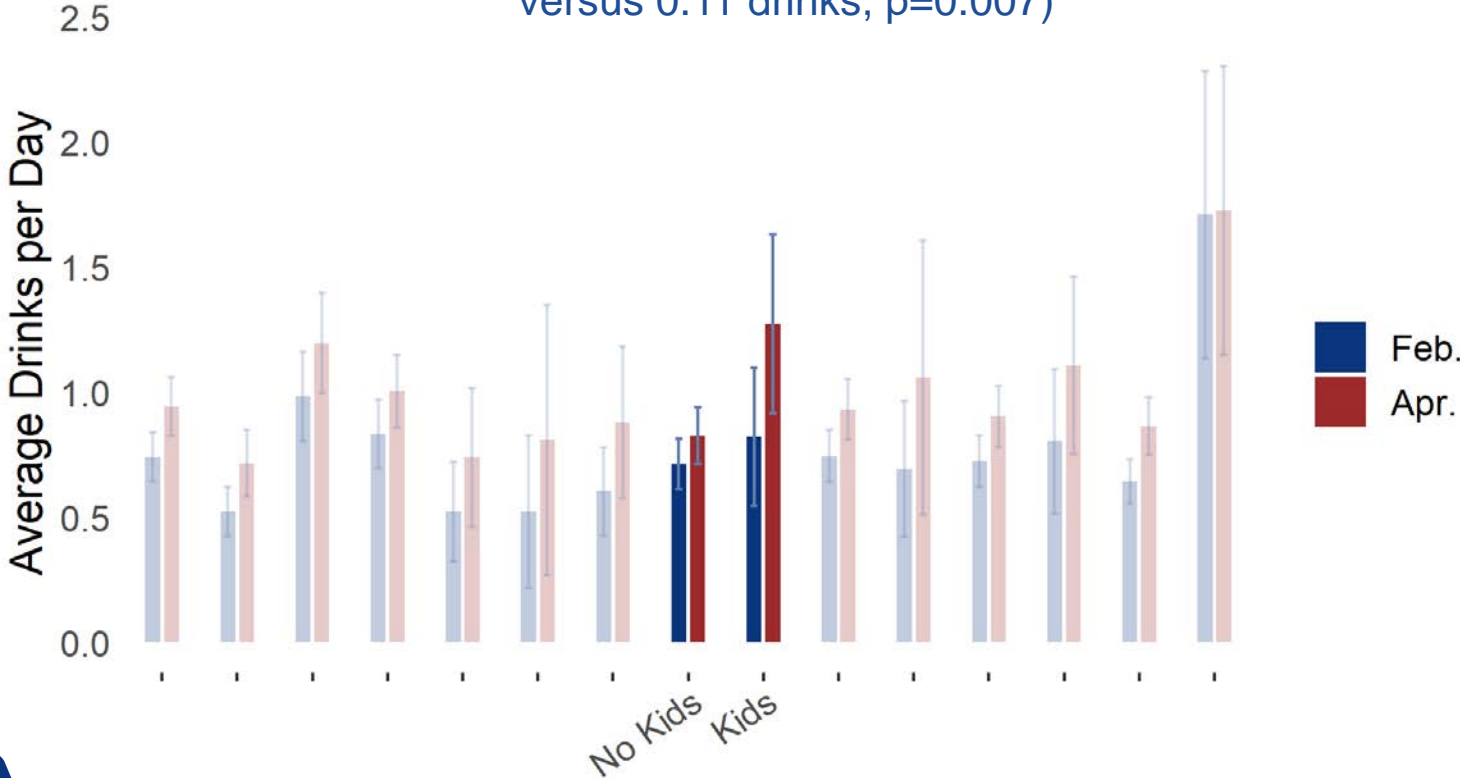
Average Drinks per Day

*Males increased drinks per day slightly more than females (0.21 versus 0.19, $p=0.77$)



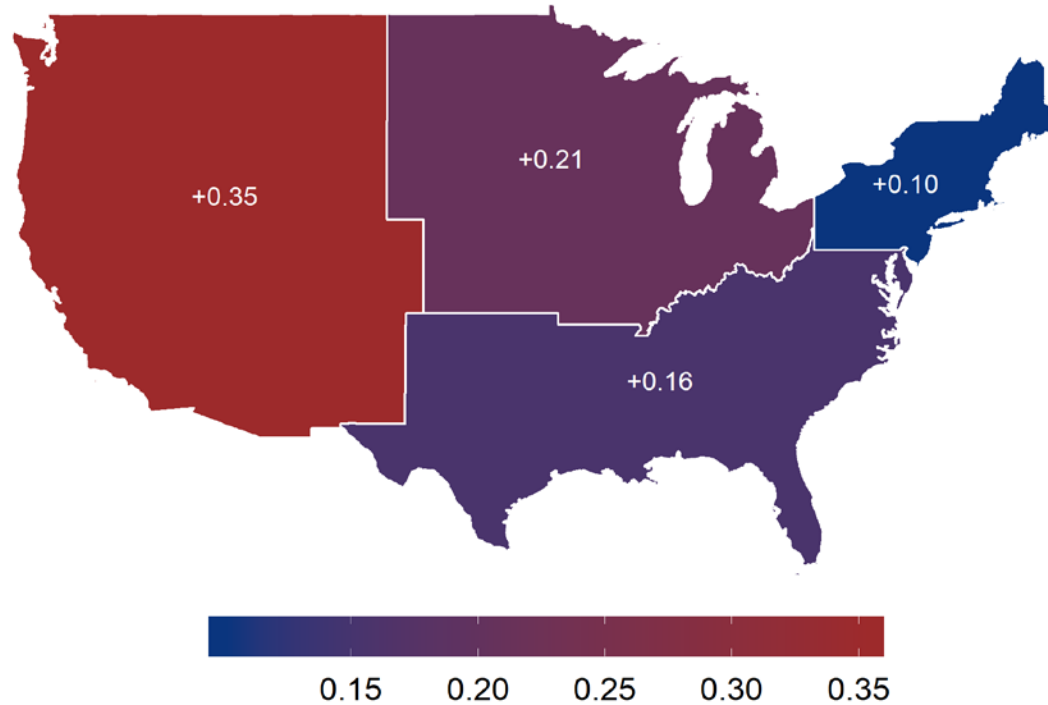
Average Drinks per Day

*Respondents with kids in the household increased more than those without kids (0.45 versus 0.11 drinks, $p=0.007$)



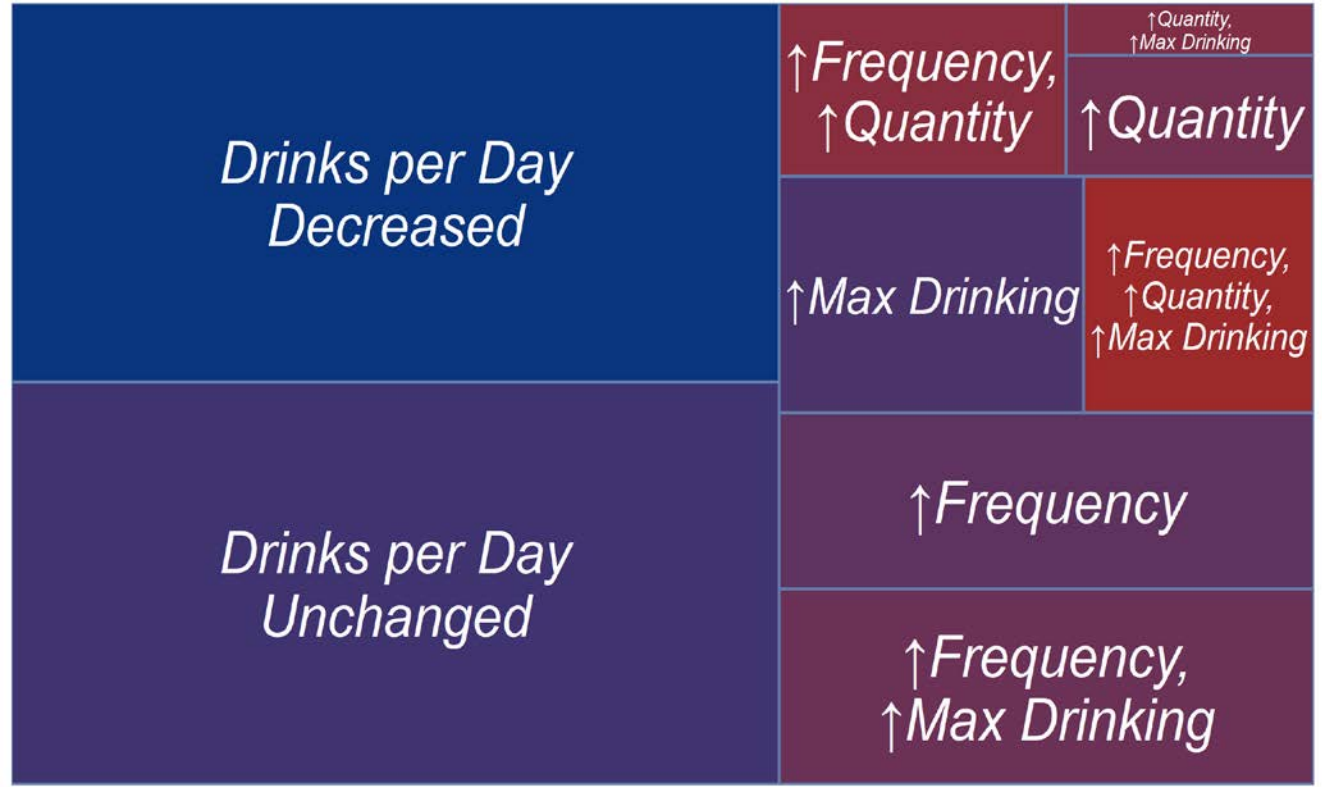
Average Change in Drinks per Day February to April, by Census Region

Average
Drinks
per Day



Note: Alaska and Hawaii are included in the West region.
Change in West region significantly larger than change in Northeast ($p < 0.05$).

Changes in Alcohol Consumption





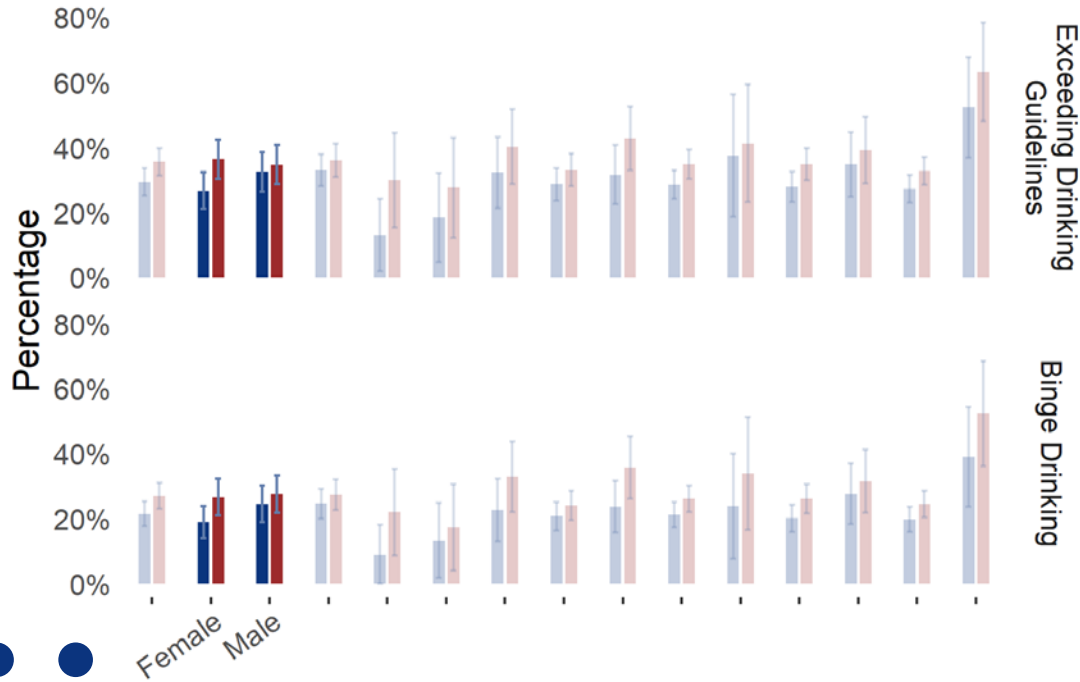
Changes in Alcohol Consumption

- 5% of respondents increased alcohol consumption from February to April in each of the three main dimensions:
 - They drank more every day.
 - They drank on more days of the week.
 - They increased consumption on days when they drank more than normal.
- This group accounted for over 40% of the increase in alcohol consumption for all respondents.

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Excessive Consumption Behaviors

Excessive Consumption Behaviors



■ Feb.
■ Apr.

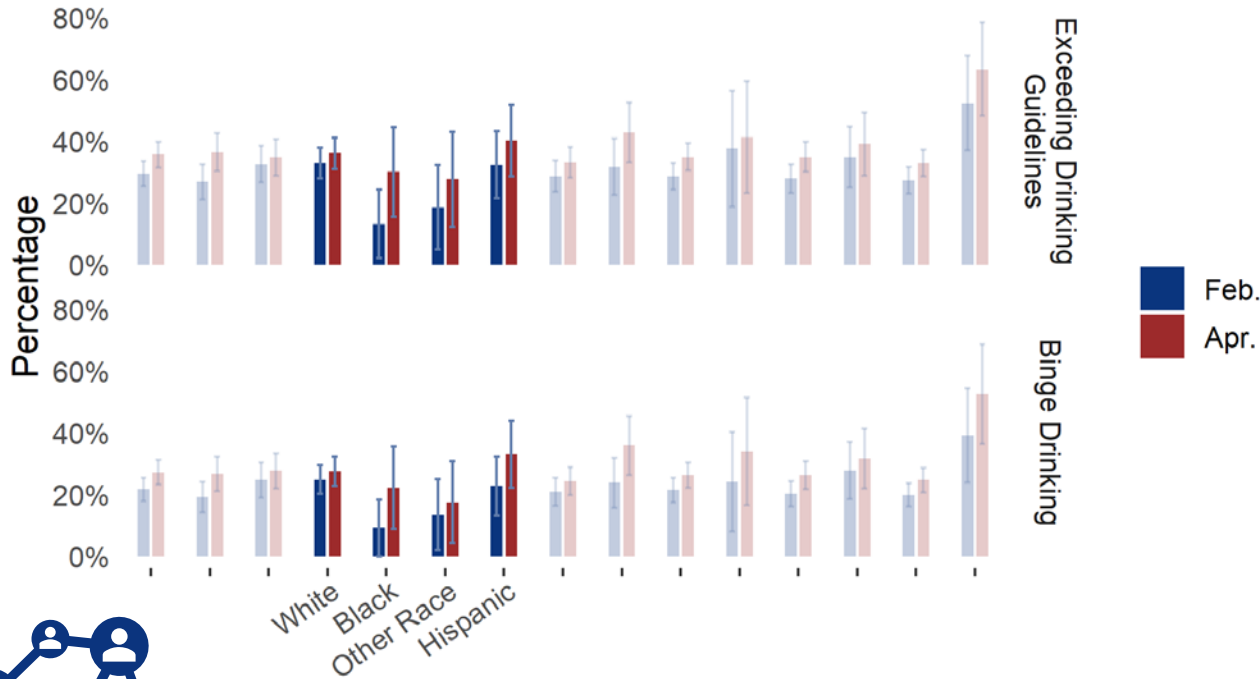
Excessive consumption increased considerably for females:

- Drinking guidelines (10% versus 2%, $p=0.026$)
- Binge drinking (8% versus 3%, $p=0.12$)



Female
Male

Excessive Consumption Behaviors

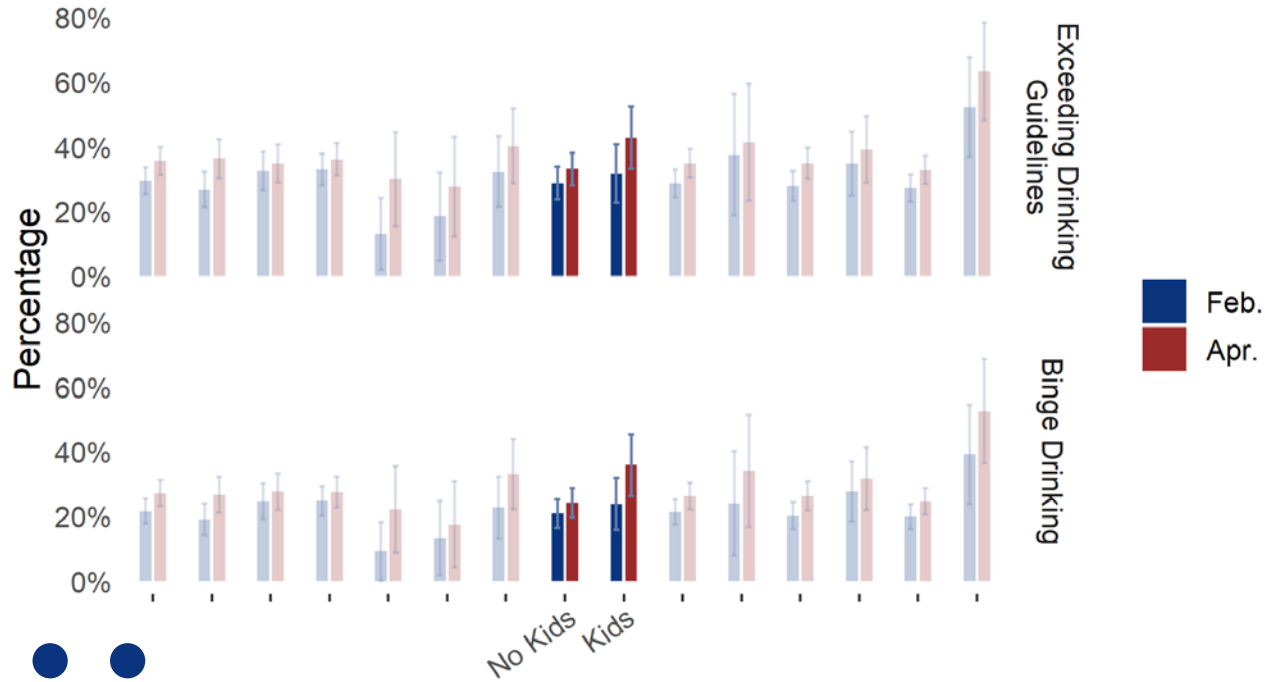


Excessive consumption increased considerably for Black respondents:

- Drinking guidelines (17% versus 3% among Whites, $p=0.028$)
- Binge drinking (13% versus 3% among Whites, $p=0.07$)



Excessive Consumption Behaviors



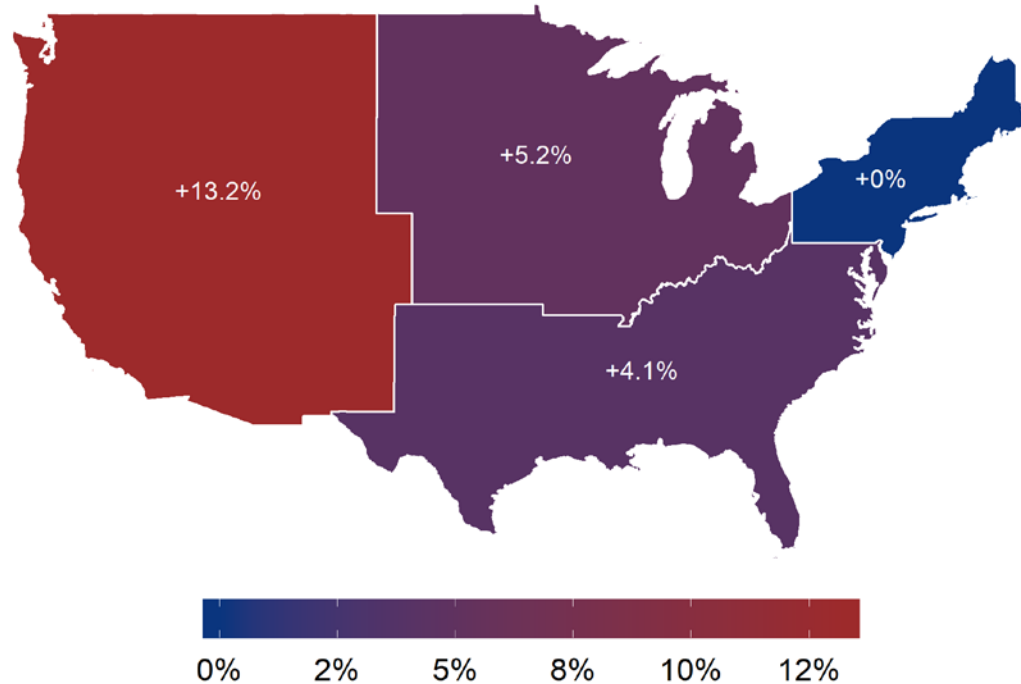
Excessive consumption increased more for respondents with kids:

- Drinking guidelines (11% versus 4%, $p=0.21$)
- Binge drinking (12% versus 3%, $p=0.09$)



Change in Percentage Exceeding Drinking Guidelines February to April, by Census Region

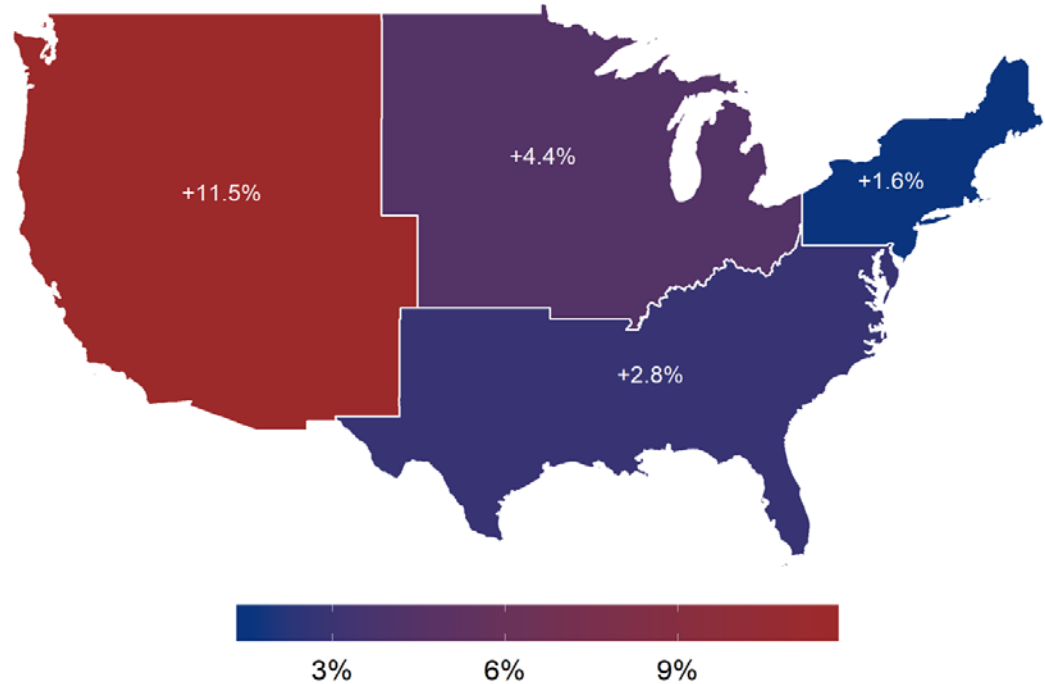
Excessive Consumption Behaviors



Note: Alaska and Hawaii are included in the West region.
Change in West region significantly larger than change in Northeast ($p < 0.01$).

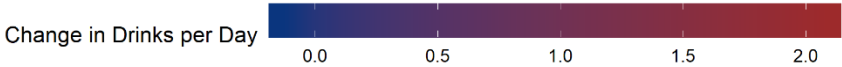
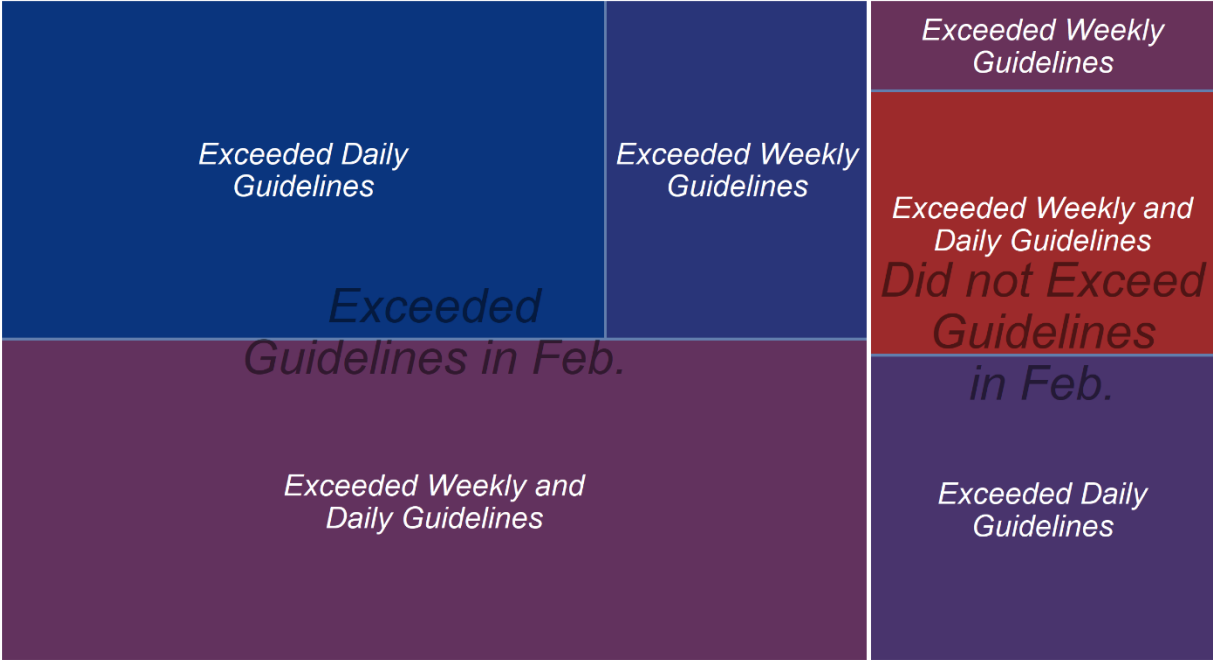
Change in Percentage Binge Drinking February to April, by Census Region

Binge Drinking



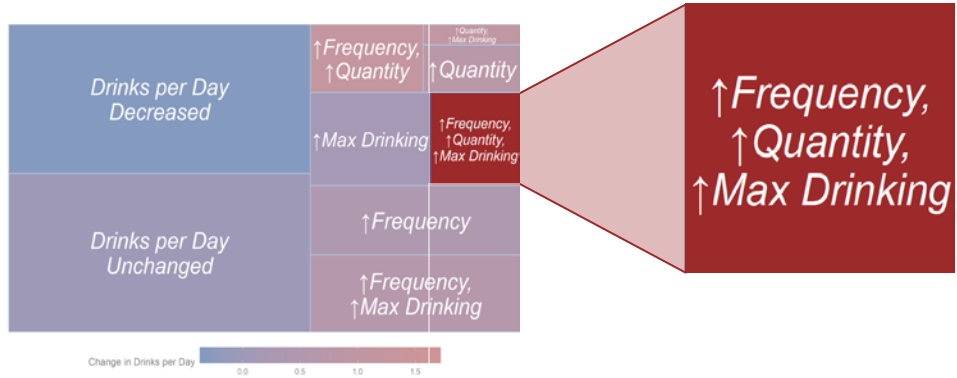
Note: Alaska and Hawaii are included in the West region.

Of Those Exceeding Drinking Guidelines in April...



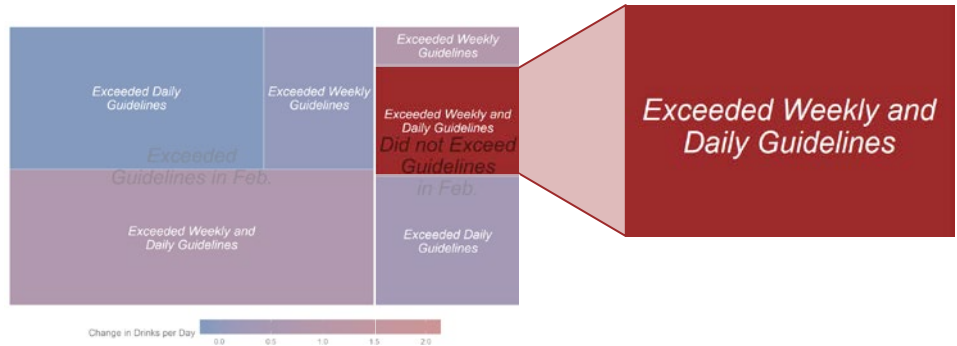
The largest changes in alcohol consumption were concentrated among people who did not exceed drinking guidelines in February.

The Big Picture



50% overlap

7% of respondents



65% of total increase in drinks per day

85% did not exceed guidelines in February

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Conclusions

Key Takeaways

Alcohol consumption, including excessive consumption behaviors, has increased overall and across several groups.

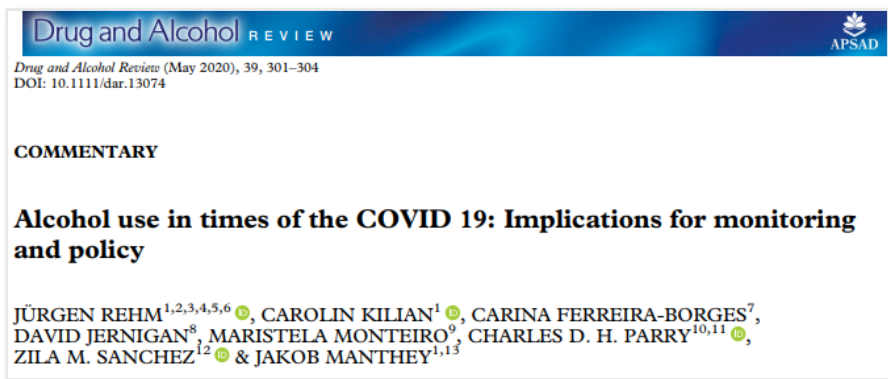
The largest increases in all measures were observed in the Western U.S.

Being female, Black, or having children in the household was associated with significant increases on at least one measure.

The largest increases in alcohol consumption were among people who increased their usual quantity consumed and those who were *not* drinking in excess of recommended guidelines in February.

Why Did Alcohol Consumption Increase?

- **Some studies predicted lower alcohol consumption**
- Why might that not be the case?
 - Expectation of lower access to alcohol offset by policy changes
 - More leisure time and fewer alternative activities
 - Response to stress



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Cocktails, Now to Go

Bars and restaurants bottle up mixed drinks for takeout as the New York State Liquor Authority offers “new off-premises privileges.”



PDT was one of the first cocktail bars to offer drinks to go, with its Benton's old-fashioned. Evan Sung for The New York Times

Curbside service expands at Pa. liquor stores starting today



PITTSBURGH POST-GAZETTE
Got a news tip? 412-263-1601
localnews@post-gazette.com

APR 27, 2020

7:32 AM

Why Did Alcohol Consumption Increase?

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Coronavirus: Alcohol fears amid lockdown boredom

By Tomos Lewis
BBC News

© 28 April 2020

FOOD // WINE

The coronavirus is driving us to drink.
Maybe that's OK

Plus: Resources for keeping yourself fed while sheltering in place, in this week's Drinking with Esther newsletter

Why Did Alcohol Consumption Increase?


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- Why might that not be the case?
 - Expectation of lower access to alcohol offset by policy changes
 - More leisure time and fewer alternative activities
 - **Response to stress**

Elsevier Public Health Emergency Collection
Public Health Emergency COVID-19 Initiative

[Lancet Public Health](#). 2020 May; 5(5): e259.
Published online 2020 Apr 8. doi: [10.1016/S2468-2667\(20\)30088-8](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2468-2667(20)30088-8)

Alcohol use and misuse during the COVID-19 pandemic: a potential public health crisis?

[James M. Clay^a](#) and [Matthew O. Parker^b](#)

 **ELSEVIER**

Social Science & Medicine
Volume 131, April 2015, Pages 131-146

Review

How economic crises affect alcohol consumption and alcohol-related health problems: A realist systematic review

Moniek C.M. de Goeij^{a,*,†}, Marc Suhrcke^{b, c, †}, Veronica ToFolutti^b, Dike van de Mheen^{a, †, ‡}, Tim M. Schoenmakers^{a, †}, Anton E. Kunst^a

Frequent binge drinking five to six years after exposure to 9/11: Findings from the World Trade Center Health Registry

Alice E. Welch^{a,*}, Kimberly Caramanica^a, Carey B. Maslow^a, James E. Cone^a, Mark R. Farfel^a, Katherine M. Keyes^{b,c}, Steven D. Stellman^{a,b}, and Deborah S. Hasin^b

Implications of Increased Alcohol Consumption

○ Short-term

- Potential impact of increased drinking at home on domestic violence and child neglect
- Impact of alcohol on immune system and complications of COVID-19
- Risk factor for depression and suicide

○ Long-term

- Potential for escalation into alcohol use disorder
- Morbidity and mortality associated with increased alcohol consumption





Research Priorities Moving Forward

- Monitor alcohol consumption and alcohol policies as COVID-19-related restrictions are lifted.
- Monitor alcohol-attributable harms during and following the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Support wider implementation of public awareness campaigns that encourage people to drink less or at least not drink more than usual.
- Understand connection between policy changes and alcohol consumption.
- Conduct more waves of the current survey.

Contact Us



Carolina Barbosa,
PharmD, PhD
cbarbosa@rti.org



Alexander J. Cowell,
PhD
cowell@rti.org



William N. Dowd,
BA
wdowd@rti.org