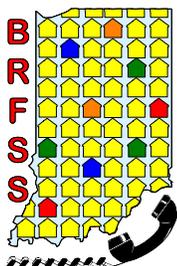


Indiana BRFSS Newsletter



Indiana State Department of Health
Epidemiology Resource Center
Data Analysis

Alcohol Consumption



A large proportion of the adult population drinks alcohol. While light-to-moderate drinking can have beneficial effects on the heart, particularly among those at greatest risk for heart attacks, heavier drinking can increase a number of health risks. Binge drinking is a factor in homicide, suicide, and marital violence. Even small amounts of alcohol can contribute to motor vehicle accidents and death. Long-term heavy drinking increases the risk for high blood pressure, stroke, and certain forms of cancer (e.g., esophageal, oral, throat, and colorectal) and also increases the risk for cirrhosis and other liver disorders (National Center for Health Statistics).

Many health conditions and behaviors are not reportable; hence, prevalence data must be obtained from another source. The Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) is an annual, random digit-dial telephone survey of adults aged 18 years and older. The survey is conducted through a cooperative agreement with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). All 50 states and the District of Columbia participate.

The BRFSS relies on self-reported data. This type of survey has certain limitations that should be understood when interpreting the data. Many times, respondents have the tendency to underreport some behaviors that may be considered socially unacceptable (e.g., smoking, heavy alcohol use). Conversely, respondents may overreport behaviors that are desirable (e.g., physical activity, nutrition).

The information on alcohol consumption of Indiana adults in this report was obtained from the 2004 BRFSS survey. A drink of alcohol is defined as one can or bottle of beer, one glass of wine, one can or bottle of wine cooler, one cocktail or one shot of liquor. Respondents were asked about their alcohol consumption during the past 30 days.

Male respondents were significantly more likely than female respondents to report having had at least one drink in the past 30 days (58.5% vs. 42.0%, respectively). Approximately 50 percent of respondents reported not having had any alcoholic beverages in the past month, while approximately 5 percent of respondents reported having had more than 60 drinks in the past month (see Figure 1).

Binge drinking is defined as having five or more drinks on one occasion. Overall, approximately 15 percent of respondents reported binge drinking in the past 30 days. Male respondents were significantly more likely than female respondents to report binge drinking (22.2% vs. 7.3%, respectively). Respondents aged 54 years and younger were significantly more likely than respondents aged 55 years and older to report binge drinking (see Figure 2).

There were no statistically significant differences in reported binge drinking among race/ethnicity groups, education, and household income levels.

Respondents were asked about the number of times in the past month that they had had five or more drinks on an occasion. Male respondents were statistically more likely than female respondents to report five or more episodes of binge drinking. Female respondents were statistically more likely than male respondents to report no episodes of binge drinking in the past month (see Figure 3).

Heavy drinking is defined as having more than two drinks per day for men and more than one drink per day for women. Male respondents were significantly more likely than female respondents to report heavy drinking (6.3% vs. 4.2%, respectively).

Figure 1

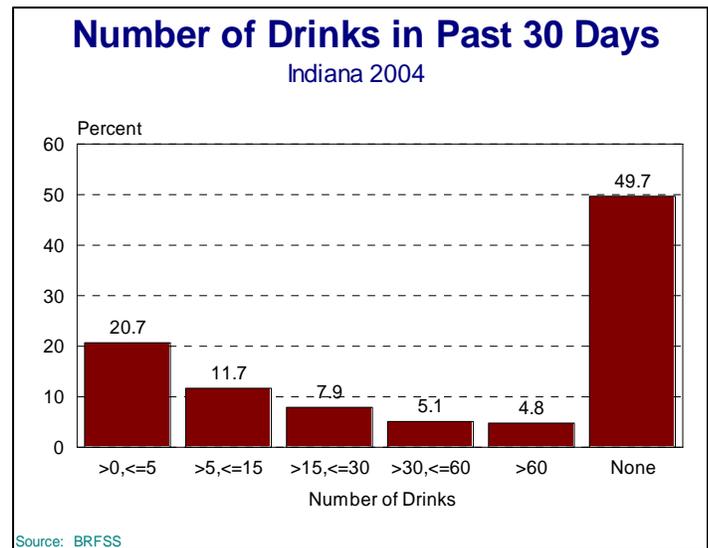
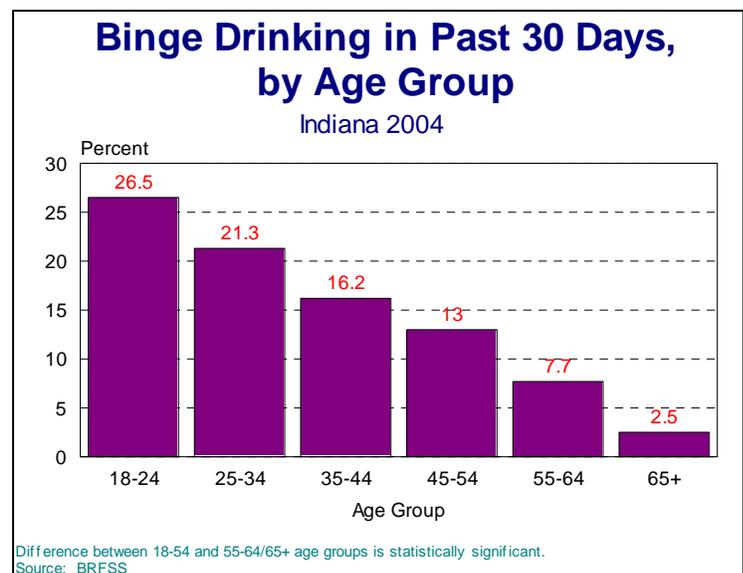


Figure 2



White respondents were significantly more likely than black or Hispanic respondents to report heavy drinking (5.4% vs. 2.5% and 2.6%, respectively). Respondents aged 18-24 years were significantly more likely than respondents aged 25-34 and 55 and older to report heavy drinking. There were no significant differences in reported heavy drinking among household income levels.

Respondents who reported binge or heavy drinking were more likely to be current cigarette smokers than respondents who did not report binge or heavy drinking (see Figure 4).

Respondents were asked if they had driven a car after having had too much to drink in the past 30 days. Approximately 13 percent of respondents who reported binge drinking reported driving after drinking alcohol. The results were the same for respondents who reported heavy drinking. One percent of respondents who did not report binge drinking and approximately 4 percent of respondents who did not report heavy drinking reported driving after drinking alcohol.

Healthy People 2010 Objective 26-11c sets a goal of 6.0 percent for binge drinking in the past month for adults aged 18 years and older.

In cases of suspected alcohol addiction, individuals should check with their physicians and insurance carriers for available services. Indiana residents with suspected alcohol addiction who are uninsured or underinsured can call the Indiana Family and Social Services Administration's Department of Mental Health and Addiction Consumer Service Line for available services at 800.901.1133 or visit their Web site at <http://www.IN.gov/fssa/servicemental/>

Figure 3

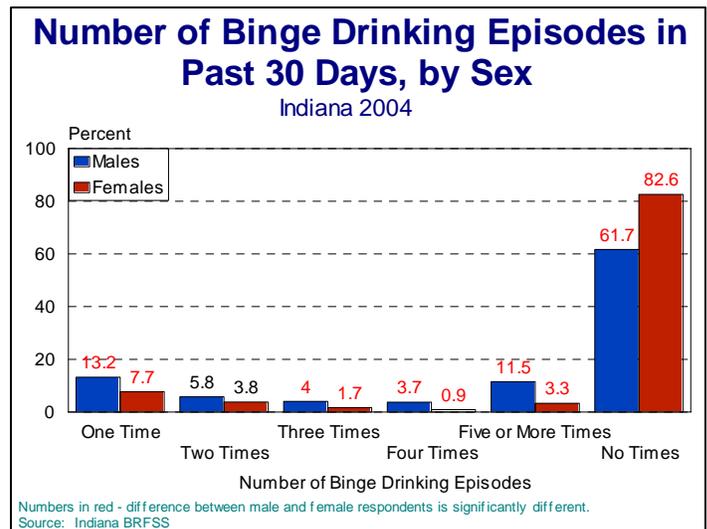
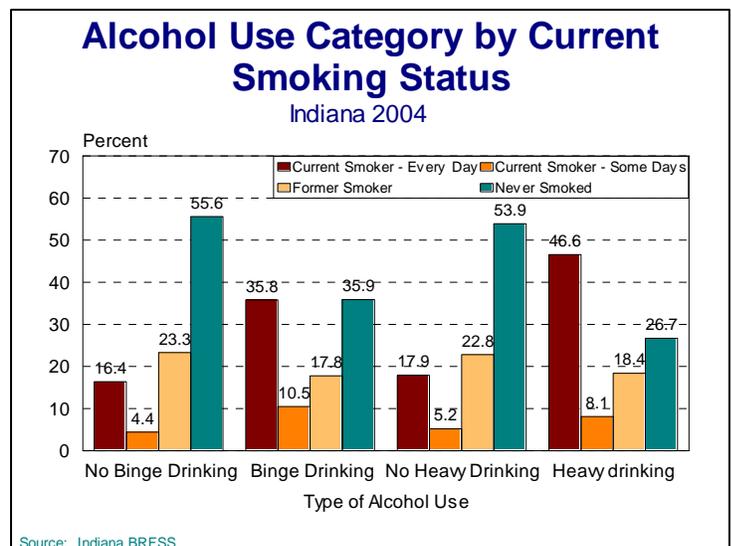


Figure 4

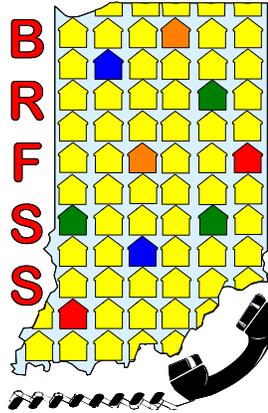




Indiana State Department of Health

Epidemiology Resource Center
Data Analysis
2 North Meridian Street, 3-D
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Phone: 317.233.7416
Fax: 317.233.7378
E-mail: data-analysis@isdh.IN.gov



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Robert Teclaw, DVM, MPH, PhD

Data Provider
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Editor
Linda Stemnock

Director, Data Analysis Team
Jon Lewis, PhD

Design/Layout
Kristy Holzhausen

Surveys
Clearwater Research, Inc.

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