

Fact Sheet:



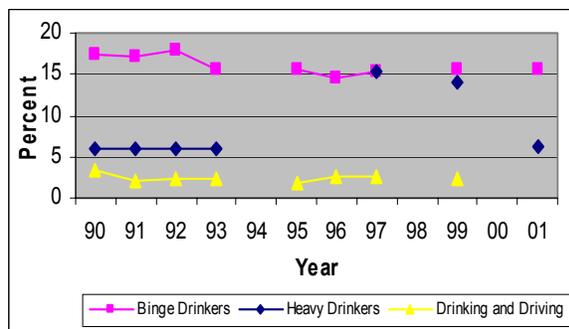
Drinking-Related Behaviors

The Department of Alcohol and Drug Programs in collaboration with the Department of Health Services and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has been tracking trends in key drinking-related behaviors in the California adult population since 1984. This fact sheet will focus on:

- **Heavy Drinking:** More than two drinks per day for men, or more than one drink per day for women.
- **Binge Drinking:** Consumption of five or more drinks on a single occasion one or more times in the last month.
- **Drinking and Driving:** Driving after drinking too much one or more times in the last month.

These specific behaviors were selected for study by CDC because they are related to the leading causes of death.

Trends



As can be seen from the chart, the percent of respondents who reported heavy drinking varied over time, with a

low of 5.9 percent in 1990 and 1991 and peaking at 15.2 percent in 1997. The chart also indicates a slight decline in the percent of respondents who reported binge drinking, with a high of 17.8 percent in 1992 and a low of 14.6 percent in 1996. A slight decline is also indicated in the percent of respondents who reported drinking and driving. The reported high was 3.4 percent in 1990 to a low of 1.9 percent in 1995.

Gender

The following table, which displays data from 2001 only, indicates that men (7.4 percent) are more likely than women (5.0 percent) to be heavy drinkers, and that men (24.4 percent) are more likely than women (6.9 percent) to engage in binge drinking. Table 1 also indicates that men (3.6 percent) were more likely than women (1.1 percent) to drive after drinking too much.

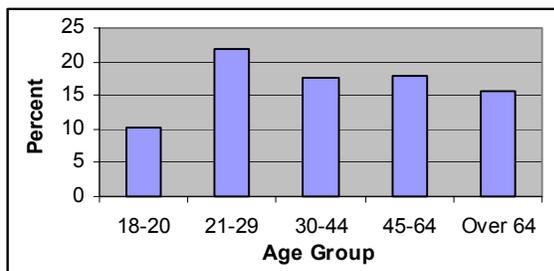
Percent of Responses – 2001		
	Men	Women
Heavy Drinkers	7.4	5.0
Binge Drinkers	24.4	6.9
Drinking and Driving.*	3.6*	1.1*

* Data from 1999

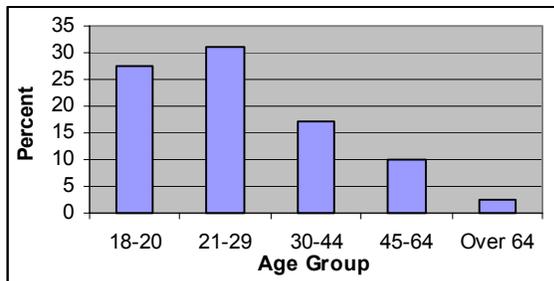
Age

Age also plays a role in drinking-related behaviors. Younger adults tend to be more likely to engage in these risky behaviors. Even though 18–20 year olds are under the legal drinking age, this small group has the second highest rate of binge drinking, and the highest rate of drinking and driving.

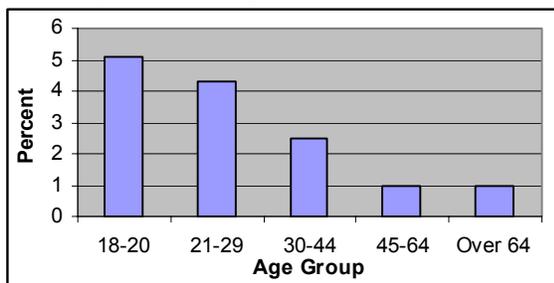
Heavy Drinkers



Binge Drinkers



Drinking and Driving



Conclusions

The general conclusions presented by these data are that behaviors related to alcohol consumption and pose health risks are more prevalent among men than among women, and much more prevalent among young adults than among the older population. Of particular interest is about 24 percent of adult men and about 27 percent of all 18 to 20 year olds in California engage in binge drinking, and almost 4 percent of the men, and 5 percent of all 18 to 20 year olds drive after drinking too much. These behaviors pose health and safety risks to the general population in California, as well as to those actually consuming the alcohol.

How the Behaviors Were Measured

The prevalence of health practices and behaviors in California is measured through the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS). BRFSS is a random-digit dialing telephone survey of adults in California and the rest of the United States. Results are weighted to reflect the California population as a whole. BRFSS is coordinated and partially supported by CDC and is conducted by the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services.