

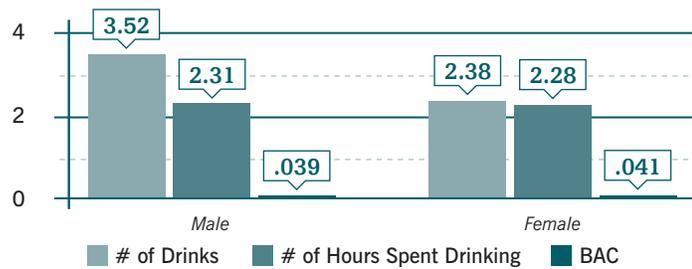
GENDER DIFFERENCES IN DRINKING ON MISSOURI CAMPUSES

Partners in Prevention (PIP) is a statewide coalition dedicated to creating healthy and safe college campuses in Missouri. PIP focuses on reducing high-risk behaviors, and tracks such progress through the implementation of the Missouri College Health Behavior Survey (MCHBS). The MCHBS is implemented annually and collects student demographic information, and reported health behaviors, including alcohol use. Analyses by subpopulations allow us to examine differences between groups and make recommendations based on the results. PIP recognizes that there are more than two genders; however, for the purposes of this brief, we compared only those identifying as male to those identifying as female. Students identifying as transgender were not included in the dataset for this brief.

DISCUSSION

When comparing MCHBS data on gender and alcohol use, distinct patterns emerge. In general, male students drink more per occasion, but female students achieve higher blood alcohol concentrations (BAC). Blood alcohol concentrations are calculated using gender, weight, amount of alcohol consumed and time spent drinking.

Comparing Alcohol Use Among Different Genders



As shown in the graph above, men and women typically drink for the same amount of time (2.31 vs. 2.28 hours); however, men consume more drinks during that time period (3.52 vs. 2.38 for women), yet females achieve higher a BAC. The difference in BAC is likely due to physiological differences in metabolism of alcohol and weight differences between males and females. Therefore, it is especially important to acknowledge physiological differences between males and females.

Protective behaviors are self-control strategies that are purposively done to reduce potential danger. Notably, women are already more likely to employ protective behaviors compared to men. Many of the protective behaviors used more often by females can be linked to sexual assault prevention behaviors recommended on college campuses¹.

Protective Behavior	Men	Women	Difference
Know where their drink has been at all times	48%	76%	28%
Make sure to go home with a friend	36%	63%	27%
Eaten before and/or during alcohol consumption	34%	49%	15%
Avoid trying to "keep up" with other drinkers	22%	36%	14%
Purposively limit the number of drinks consumed	13%	19%	6%
Alternate alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks	9%	14%	5%
Avoid drinking games	9%	14%	5%
Using a designated driver	49%	53%	4%

SUMMARY

Females obtain a higher BAC despite drinking fewer drinks than males. Females are also more likely to use protective behaviors than males. Whether higher BAC potential and use of protective factors among females is directly related cannot be positively concluded, however, it is likely to be one reason that females choose to not drink as much as their male counterparts. Campuses should create social norms campaigns influencing males to use more protective behaviors. Increasing peer education and outreach education on campuses geared towards male students, including distributing BAC cards listing some protective behaviors to students and encouraging them to use them while drinking. Continuing to highlight protective behaviors to all students is strongly encouraged, as well.

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1. Alcohol-Related Sexual Assault: A Common Problem among College Students. Antonia Abbey. 2002.