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For Immediate Release

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Alcohol Consumption in Women is Skyrocketing: Stress Drinking May Lead to Serious Health Problems

UNIVERSITY PARK, Pa.—Jan. 25, 2014—Alcohol consumption and hospitalizations has increased in women at alarming rates. From 1999 to 2008, hospitalizations for women ages 18-24 have elevated up to 50 percent due to overdosing on alcohol, reports USA Today author Kim Painter.

A report done by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention showed that 24 percent of women at a college level binge drink. Compare that number to the 10 percent of women between ages 45 and 64 binge drink and a low but still significant six percent of women over the age of 65 that binge drink.

For women, binge drinking consists of four or more consecutive drinks within two hours. While this may not seem like a lot of consumption, women are more vulnerable to the effects of alcohol than men. According to Gabriel Glaser of The Wall Street Journal, a woman's body has more fat that holds more alcohol than water so it cannot be as easily diluted while a man's body has enzymes that break down the alcoholic compounds before it can reach the bloodstream.

There are many reasons why college culture would influence women to binge drink. Penn State University's Jimirro Center for the Study of Media Influence conducted a survey based on attitudes and beliefs about alcohol for college students. Of the 550 respondents between 2012-2013, 89 percent of women believe that drinking helps relieve stress. Relieving stress could result in going to a fraternity or sorority where it is easy to get free alcohol, which 76 percent agreed a lot with on the survey. Students believe that drinking makes it easier to socialize and helps break the ice at parties.

Women who drink more than the recommended amount of alcohol can face serious health concerns. Although women drink less on average than men on a lifetime basis, females are more susceptible to having liver damage and heart diseases. The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism concluded that there is a connection between drinking and breast cancer.

Women who drink one alcoholic drink daily have a 10 percent increased change of catching cancer than women who do not drink. Another 10 percent increased chance of contracting cancer is added for every extra drink other the one daily drink per day.

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A couple of solutions to help control the amount of alcohol consumption and reduce binge drinking is to know how much alcohol is in your drink. Recognizing how much alcohol is in your drink, whether it be beer, wine, or a mixed drink can help pace how much one drinks throughout the night. Moderation is important while drinking. Men should not have more than four drinks per day or 14 per week. Women should not have more than three drinks per day or seven per week. Eating is also important while drinking because it slows down the effects of alcohol.

Although alcohol is a cultural normality in the United States, understanding the harmful effects of alcohol is important for all to recognize. Educating both men and women alike of the dangers of heavy alcohol consumption is essential to keeping the world a safer place and help to reduce the growing epidemic.

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