

Fact Sheet:



Drinking-Related Behaviors

Trends in key drinking-related behaviors in the California adult population since 1984 are tracked through the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS). This fact sheet will focus on BRFSS results from 2002-2006 for the following:

- **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 for men, or four or more drinks for on a single occasion for women.

GENDER

A higher percent of male respondents were likely to be heavy drinkers (Figure One) and binge drinkers (Figure Two) in comparison to women respondents.

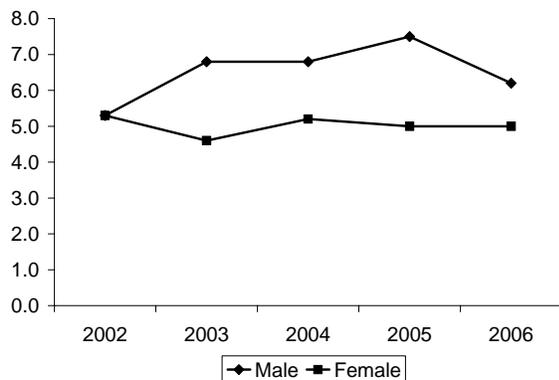


Figure 1. Percent Heavy Drinker by Gender and Year

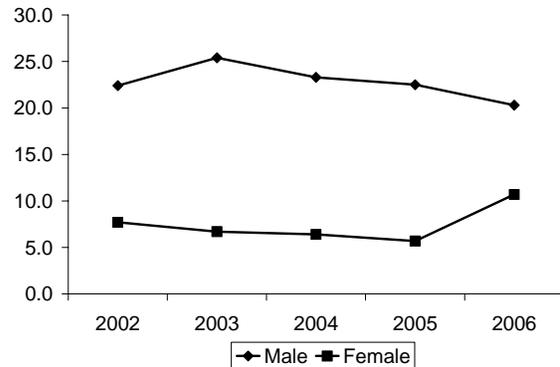


Figure 2. Percent Binge Drinking by Gender and Year

The percentage of women who binge drink (Figure Two) was slightly greater than the percentage of women who reported heavy drinking during the years 2002 through 2005. There was a notable increase between 2005 and 2006 in the percentage of women who binge drink. This issue is of concern because binge drinking carries a high risk of injury and other serious health consequences.

AGE

Younger adults were more likely to drink heavily than older persons (Figure Three). The 18-25 year age group showed a decline between 2005 and 2006 in the percentage of heavy drinkers. The percentages of heavy drinkers in other age groups have remained relatively constant across years.

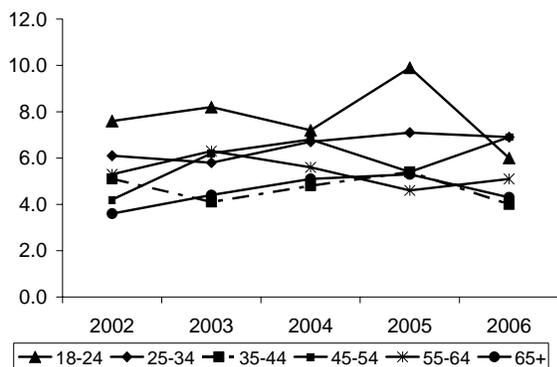


Figure 3. Percent Heavy Drinkers by Age Group and Year

Binge drinking trends were relatively stable in all age groups across years (Figure Four). Respondents aged 18 through 34 were most likely engage in binge drinking.

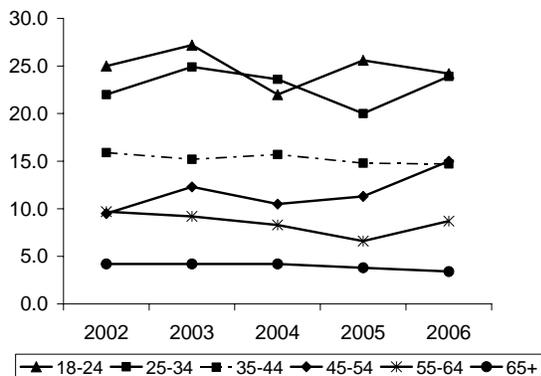


Figure 4. Percent Binge Drinking by Age Group and Year

Conclusions

The percentages of men who drink heavily are slightly higher than women. The percentages of men who binge drink are substantially higher across all years when compared to women. There was a troubling increase between 2005 and 2006 in the percentage of women who binge drink. Binge drinking was more prevalent among young adults than among the older population. These behaviors pose health and safety risks to the general population, 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 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and is conducted by the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services.