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IACSUB
ILLINOIS ASSESSMENT OF COLLEGE SUBSTANCE USE BEHAVIORS

DATA BRIEF

Alcohol Use & Behaviors

Volume 2, Issue 1

INSIDE

- **Frequency of use and high intensity drinking (p.2-4)** Review of data regarding frequency of use within a 2-week, 30-day, and 12-month period as well as data regarding high frequency drinking within a 2-week and 30 day period.
- **How are students obtaining alcohol? (p.4)** Review of data regarding how students are obtaining alcohol
- **Where are students using alcohol? (p.5)** Review of data regarding where students consume alcohol
- **Consequences of alcohol consumption by others, to self, and to others and why they use (p.5-7)** Review of data regarding consequences of alcohol consumption which students have experienced and why they choose to drink.
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2026 IACSUB Findings on Alcohol Use in Higher Education

The Illinois Assessment of College Substance Use Behaviors (IACSUB) survey drew information from 470 participants spanning nine colleges and universities across the State of Illinois. The purpose of the survey was to identify substance use behaviors among college students, such as frequency, location, and reasons for use. In this way stakeholders will be more able to identify substance use challenges in higher education and their related communities. Students were asked questions pertaining to alcohol, cannabis, and tobacco, as well as other drugs.

This brief will address alcohol use of college students from many angles including frequency of use, where students are using alcohol, the consequences of drinking, how students are obtaining alcohol, and why they choose to drink.

Alcohol Frequency of use during a 2-week period

When asked to indicate alcohol consumption in the last two weeks, 32.2% (*n*=76) indicated not drinking during this time frame. Another 21.19% (*n*=50) of respondents indicated that they had drank alcohol one day and 18.64% (*n*=44) of respondents said that they had drank alcohol two days in the past two weeks. There were a total of 236 recorded responses.

Figure 1.1

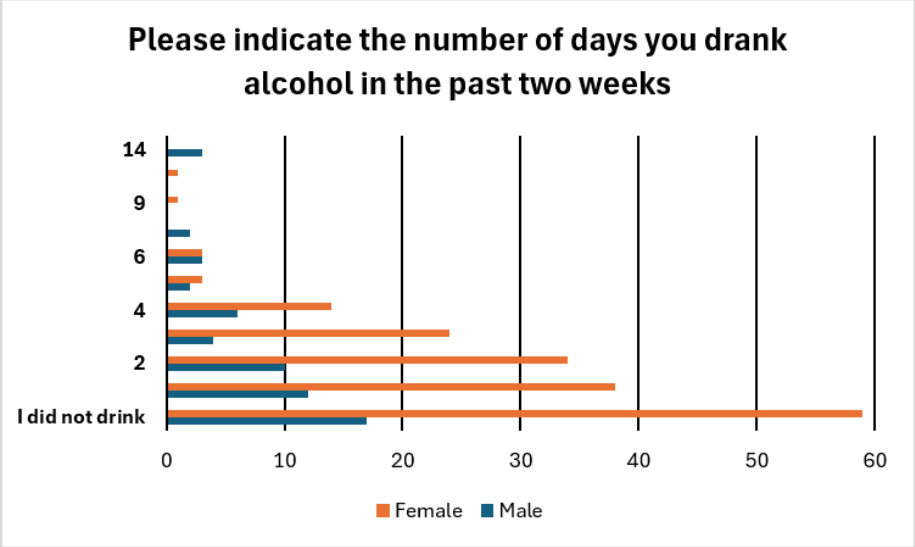
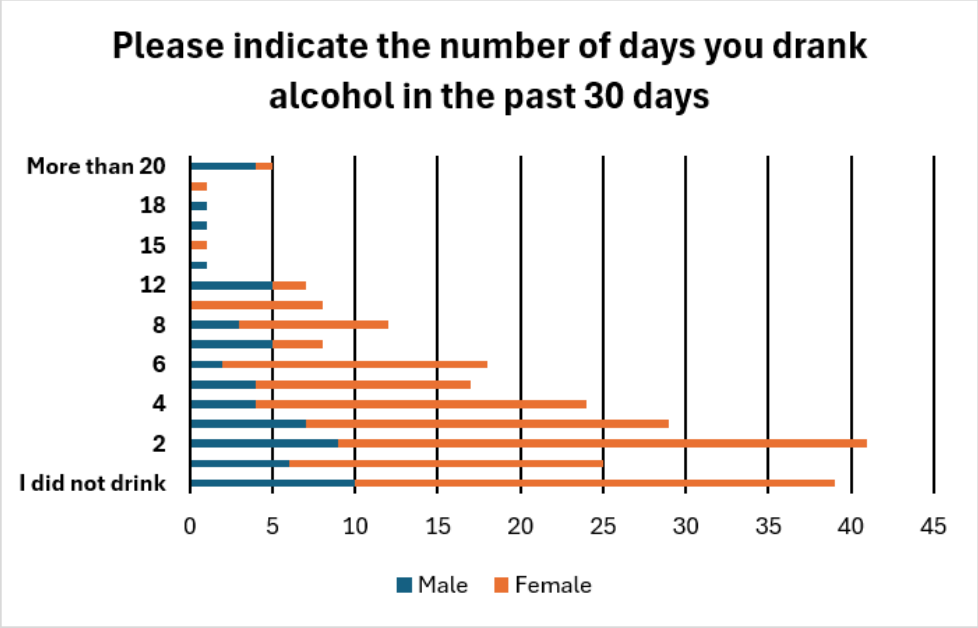


Figure 1.2



Alcohol Frequency of use during a 30-day period

When asked to indicate alcohol consumption in the last 30 days, 17.23% (*n*=41) of participants answered that they had consumed alcohol two days in the 30 day time frame. Another 16.39% (*n*=39) of participants said that they did not drink while 12.18% (*n*=29) of participants said that they had drank alcohol three days. There were a total of 238 recorded responses.

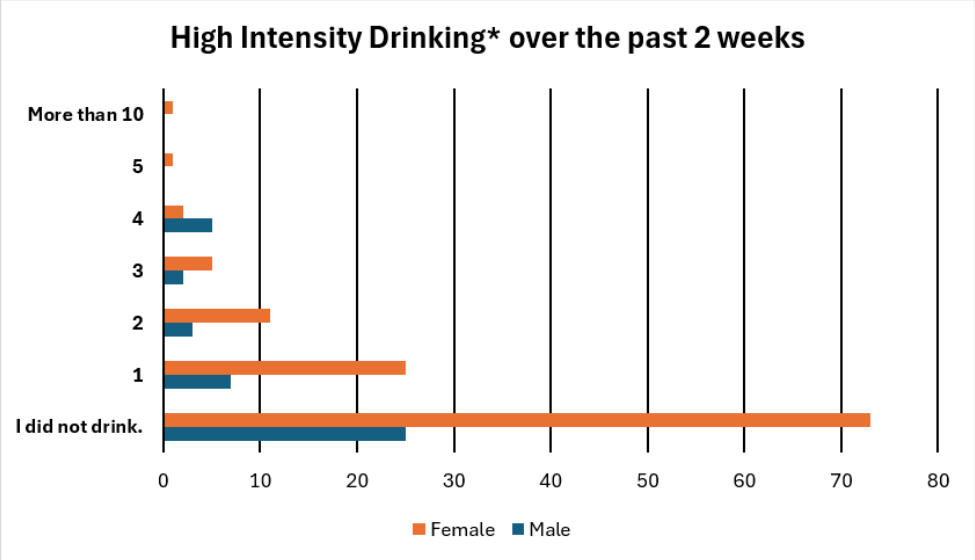
Alcohol Frequency of use during a 12-month period

Participants were asked if they had used alcohol in the past year. There were a total of 296 participant responses recorded for this question. The amount of participants who said "Yes" was 79.73% (*n*=236) and the amount of participants who said "No" was 16.5% (*n*=49).

Figure 1.3



Figure 1.4



**High intensity drinking is defined as 4 or more drinks within 2 hours for females and 5 or more drinks within 2 hours for males.*

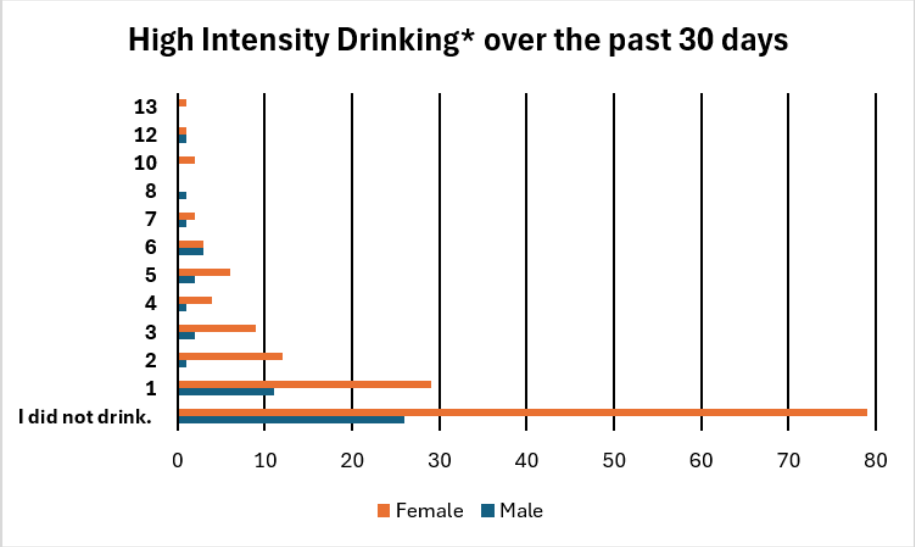
Frequency of high intensity drinking in a 2-week period

Participants were asked if they had high intensity drank during the last two weeks. This question received a total of 160 responses. Of these responses, 61.25% (*n*=98) was "I did not drink" and 20% (*n*=32) of responses was "1 day".

Frequency of high intensity drinking in a 30-day period

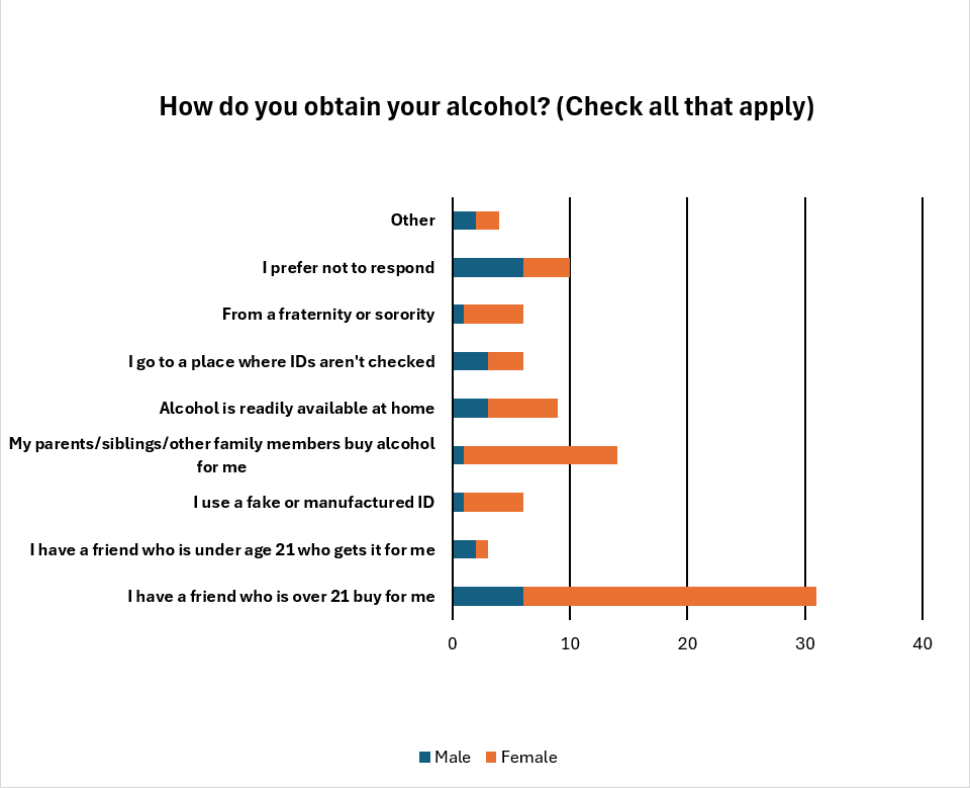
Participants were asked about their experience with high intensity drinking during the last month. There were 197 participants who provided a response to this question. Of these total participants, 53.3% (*n*=105) of them indicated they had not drank and 20.3% (*n*=40) of participants answered that they had participated in high intensity drinking once in that time frame.

Figure 1.5



**High intensity drinking is defined as 4 or more drinks within 2 hours for females and 5 or more drinks within 2 hours for males.*

Figure 1.6



How are students obtaining alcohol?

Participants were asked how they obtained alcohol and 89 responses were received. Of these total responses, the most frequently selected answer was "I have a friend who is over 21 buy for me" with 34.83% (*n*=31) of total responses. Another 15.73% (*n*=14) of respondents indicated that they had obtained alcohol from a parent, sibling, or other family member.

Where are students consuming alcohol?

When asked to indicate location of alcohol consumption, 28% of selections (*n*=162) indicated "Social gathering...", 23% of selections (*n*=133) indicated "Bars/restaurants...", 20.6% of selections (*n*=119) indicated "Where I live", and 17.5% of selections (*n*=101) indicated "At home...". There was a total of 577 selections recorded for this survey question and participants could select any and all applicable locations.

Figure 1.7

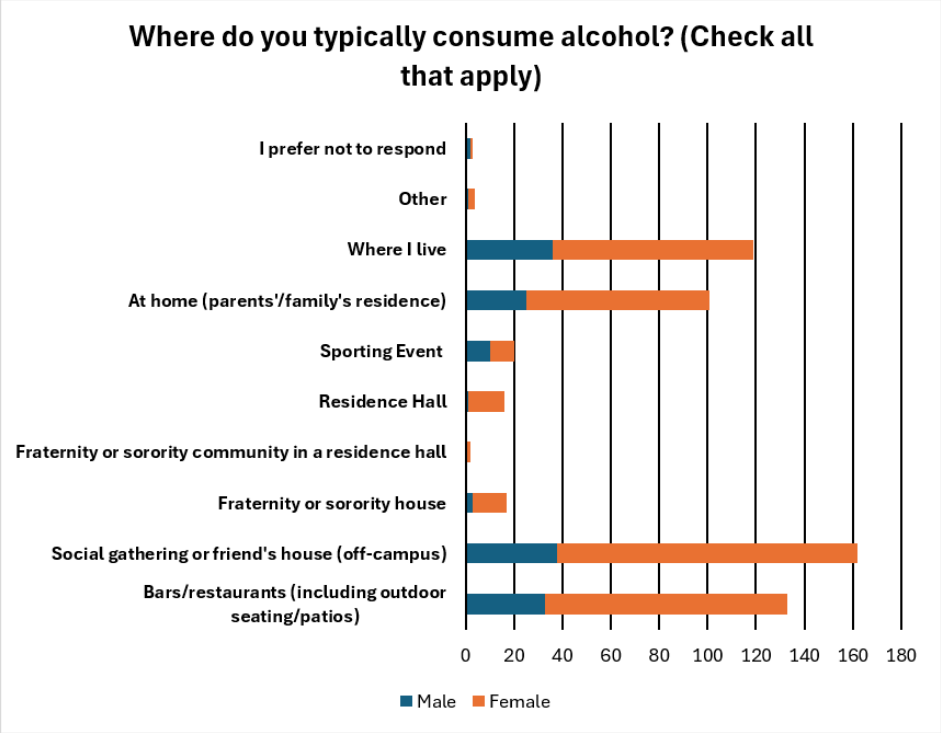
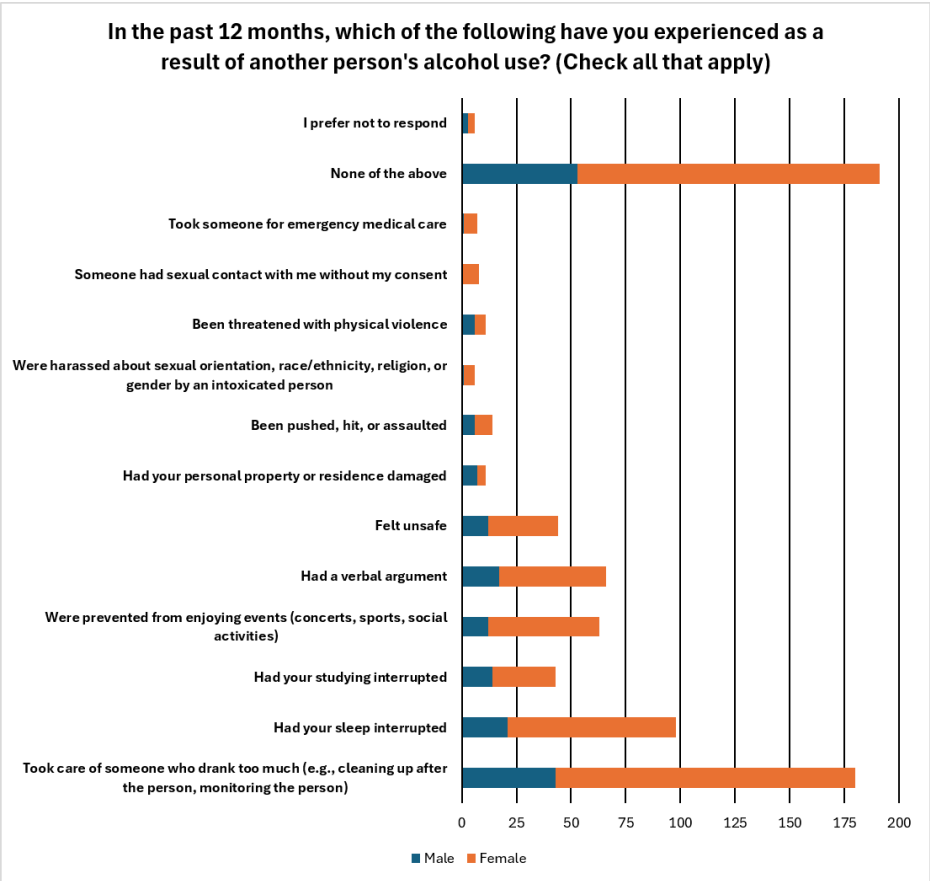


Figure 1.8



What are the consequences of alcohol use by others?

When asked to indicate consequences experienced as a result of another persons alcohol use in the past 12 months, 25.5% of selections (n=191) indicated "none of the above" and 24% of selections (n=180) indicated "Took care of someone who drank too much". There was a total of 748 selections recorded for this survey question and participants could select any and all applicable consequences.

What are the consequences of alcohol use to self?

Female Data

When female participants were asked to indicate consequences experiences as a result of alcohol consumption in the past 12 months, 30.32% of selections (*n*=104) indicated "Had a hangover" and 21.57% of selections (*n*=74) indicated "Vomited". There was 343 total selections recorded for this survey question and participants could select any and all applicable consequences.

Figure 1.9

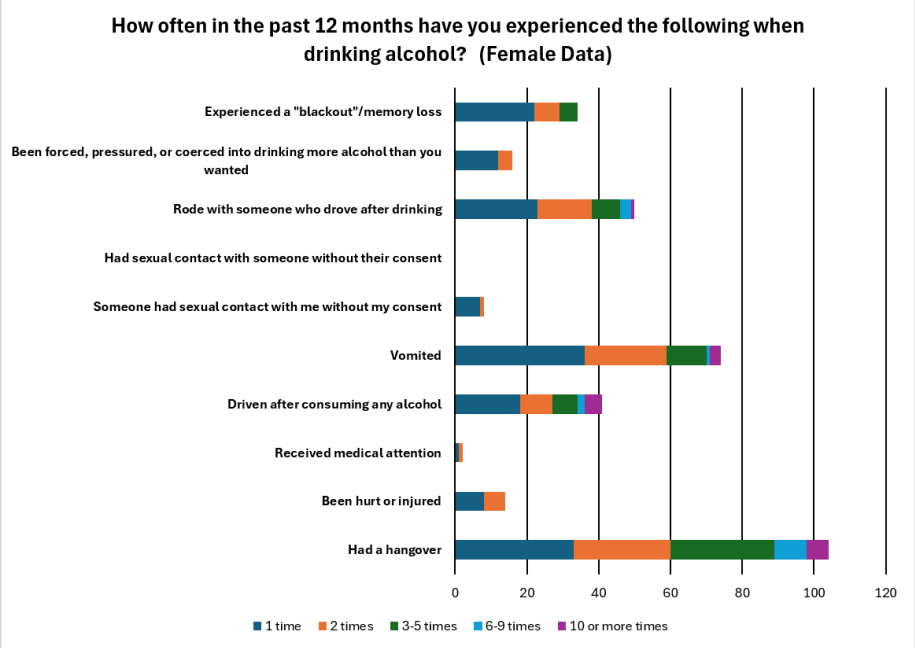
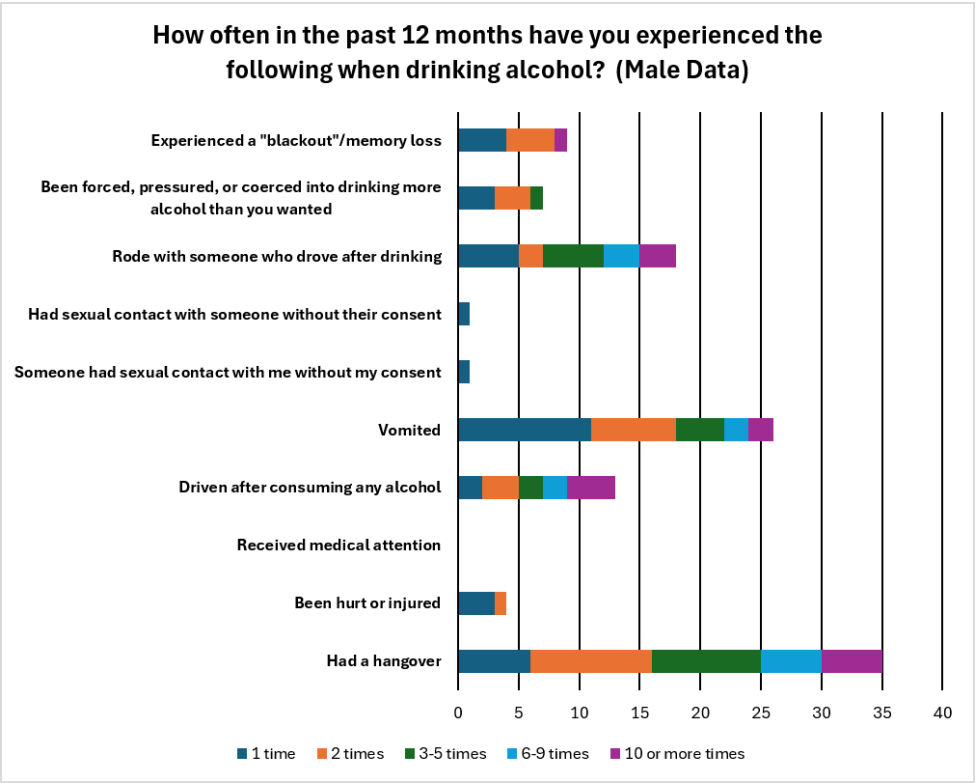


Figure 1.10



What are the consequences of alcohol use to others?

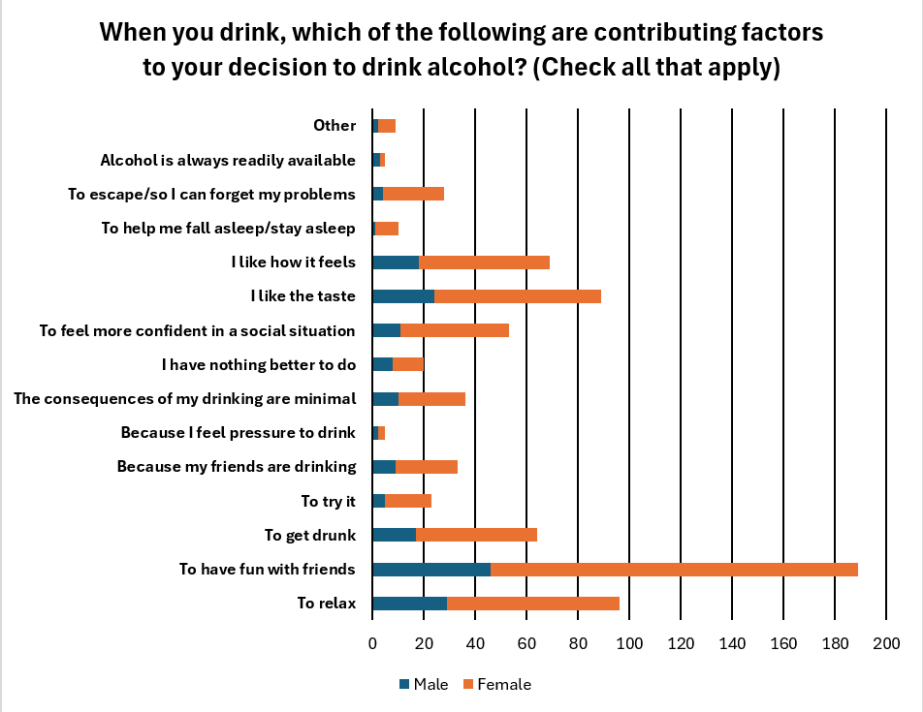
Male Data

When male participants were asked to indicate consequences experiences as a result of alcohol consumption in the past 12 months, 30.7% of selections (*n*=35) indicated "Had a hangover" and 22.81% of selections (*n*=26) indicated "Vomited". There was 114 total selections recorded for this survey question and participants could select any and all applicable consequences.

Why are students drinking?

When asked to indicate contributing factors to their decision to drink alcohol, 25.9% of selections (n=189) indicated "To have fun with friends". Another 13.2% of selections (n=96) indicated "To relax" and 12.2% of selections (n=89) indicated "I like the taste". There was 729 total selections recorded for this survey question and participants could select any and all applicable contributing factors.

Figure 1.11



SUMMARY

The findings on alcohol consumption in the IACSUB 2026 survey found that there continues to be a sharp decline in alcohol use in Illinois college and university students. Those who do choose to drink most often do so to have fun with friends. The most common place for them to drink was at social gatherings. More often than not, they obtained alcohol from a friend who is 21 or older and the most common consequences were having a hangover and vomiting or taking care of someone else who was doing so.

RESOURCES

Illinois Higher Education Center (2026). Reprint of IACSUB Survey. *Statewide AOD Survey*, 1-78.

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