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The buzz at the office

By Janet Cromley, Times Staff Writer

COCKTAIL, anyone? A new study on alcohol in the workplace has found that there may be more than coffee in you colleague's "I Hate Mondays" mug.

Based on a nationwide telephone survey of 2,805 employed adults, a researcher at the University of Buffalo in New York reports that an estimated 15% of the workforce has had at least one incident in the last year of drinking before or during work, being under the influence of alcohol while at work or being hung over while at work.

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Michael Frone, an associate professor of psychology, estimates that in the last year, 1.8% of the workforce has consumed alcohol at least once before coming to work, 7.1% of workers drank alcohol at least once during the workday and 9.2% of the workforce has soldiered on with a hangover.

The study, published in this month's Journal of Studies on Alcohol, found that alcohol use was more common among men, younger workers and single people. The good news is that such use is infrequent. For example, of employees who drank before work, 71% did it less than monthly.

Nevertheless, says Frone, "The prevalence rates are high enough that employers should have explicit policies regarding alcohol use and impairment at work and employees should be aware of these policies." The study was funded by the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism.

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