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Sexual Assault Doesn't Cause Binge Drinking in Girls: Study

But such alcohol abuse may put them at risk for sexual victimization and post-traumatic stress

Posted: July 29, 2011



FRIDAY, July 29 (HealthDay News) -- Teenage girls who develop post-traumatic stress disorder after being sexually assaulted aren't at increased risk for binge drinking, new research shows.

In the study, researchers analyzed data collected from 1,808 American girls, aged 12 to 17, who took part in a national telephone survey and were interviewed up to three times between 2005 and 2009.

During that time, 270 of the girls (15 percent) reported sexual victimization. These girls reported more post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms than other girls, but did not have more incidences of binge drinking, according to lead author Kate Walsh, a clinical intern at Medical University of South Carolina in Charleston, and colleagues.

But, the investigators found that binge drinking may increase the risk of sexual victimization among certain teenage girls, according to the study published in the July 19 online edition of the *Journal of Adolescent Health*.

Currently, there is no way to determine who will develop a drinking problem after a traumatic event such as a sexual assault, said Jennifer Livingston, a research scientist at the University of Buffalo Research Institute on Addictions, who was not involved in the study.

However, Livingston pointed out in a news release from the Center for Advancing Health, there is strong evidence that binge drinking increases the risk of being a victim of sexual assault.

"Binge drinking contributes to sexual vulnerability among adolescent girls in two ways: through incapacitation, whereby girls are taken advantage of sexually, and by occurring in illicit settings, such as sneaking out to a party, where girls don't seek help because they are afraid of getting in trouble," Livingston explained.

More information

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has more about [binge drinking](#).

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