

Press Release

June 17, 2024

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SAFE Glen Cove Coalition: Alcohol Use Disorder and Dementia

Recent narrative review research conducted by the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) has found alcohol use is a risk factor for dementia.

In 2020, an estimated 17% of the U.S. population was older than age 65; this proportion is projected to rise to about 23% by 2060. This prompts an urgent need for identifying potential and modifiable risk factors contributing to health decline. After tobacco, alcohol is the most misused substance in the United States and abroad. Even prior to the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, which contributed to increased drinking rates, alcohol consumption was notably accelerating in several demographic categories, including in men and women older than age 65. Consuming alcohol in harmful patterns—such as binge drinking (five or more drinks in men, or four or more drinks in women in about 2 hours; where a drink is equivalent to 12 oz beer, 5 oz wine, or 1.5 oz distilled spirits)—occurs in more than 25% of older Americans; annual growth trends in alcohol misuse are reported to be 2.4% in older men and 1.6% in older women.

It is projected that by 2040, 21.6% of Americans will be over the age of 65, and the population of those older than age 85 is estimated to reach 14.4 million. As current alcohol consumption among older adults is significantly higher compared to previous generations, a pressing question is whether drinking alcohol increases the risk for Alzheimer's disease or other forms of dementia.

Although not causative, older age is a risk factor for dementia: Every 5 years beyond age 65, the risk doubles and approximately one-third of people over age 85. Approximately one-third of those older than 85 are diagnosed with dementia. Older age is a risk factor for dementias, and the proportion of the U.S. population who is older than age 65 is on the rise. Additionally, there is a trend towards increasing patterns of alcohol misuse among older adults. Chronic alcohol misuse is associated with an acceleration of brain aging, a decline in cognitive function, and an increase in risk of some types of dementia. Alcohol misuse and Alcohol Use Disorder (AUD) increases risk for all types of dementia. Researchers speculate that a significant proportion of dementia misclassification includes alcohol-related dementia. Reports that AUD specifically increases Alzheimer's disease likely overestimate the relationship.

For more information about the effects of alcohol on health and well-being, professional resources, and important updates, visit the [National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism \(NIAAA\) website](#).

The SAFE Glen Cove Coalition was formed in 2003 to change societal norms about alcohol and substance use. The Coalition is concerned about excessive alcohol use in youth and adults and seeks to educate the community about its negative effects on one's health and wellness. The Glen Cove Police Department has been a longstanding member of the Coalition and works diligently to monitor alcohol sales to minors and provide prevention education to youth and adults about Social Host Law and its consequences throughout the year. To learn more about the SAFE Glen Cove Coalition please follow us on www.facebook.com/safeglencovecoalition or visit SAFE's website to learn more about Alcohol and its negative consequences please visit www.safeglencove.org.