

Over 30 percent of American adults have abused alcohol, study says

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A study funded by the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism and the New York State Psychiatric Institute suggests that more than 30 percent of American adults have abused alcohol or suffered from alcoholism at some point in their lives.

The study shows that few have received treatment. On average, alcoholics who did receive treatment, did so eight years after they developed dependence on drinking, or around age 30. The numbers differed by gender. 42 percent of men reported a history of alcohol abuse- while only 19 percent of women reported such a history. Caucasians and Native Americans were more likely to abuse alcohol than other ethnic groups. Alcohol abuse, defined by the American Psychiatric Association's diagnostic manual, is drinking-related failure to fulfill major obligations at work, school or home; social or legal problems; and drinking in hazardous situations. A previous report showed that 4.7 percent of adults reported alcohol abuse in 2001-2002.