

**NIAAA DIRECTOR'S REPORT  
ON INSTITUTE ACTIVITIES TO THE 165TH MEETING  
OF THE NATIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL ON  
ALCOHOL ABUSE AND ALCOHOLISM**

**FEBRUARY 8, 2024  
VIRTUAL MEETING**

**George F. Koob, Ph.D.  
Director**

**National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism  
National Institutes of Health**

**<https://www.niaaa.nih.gov/about-niaaa/advisory-council>**

# **In Memoriam: Sally M. Anderson, PhD**



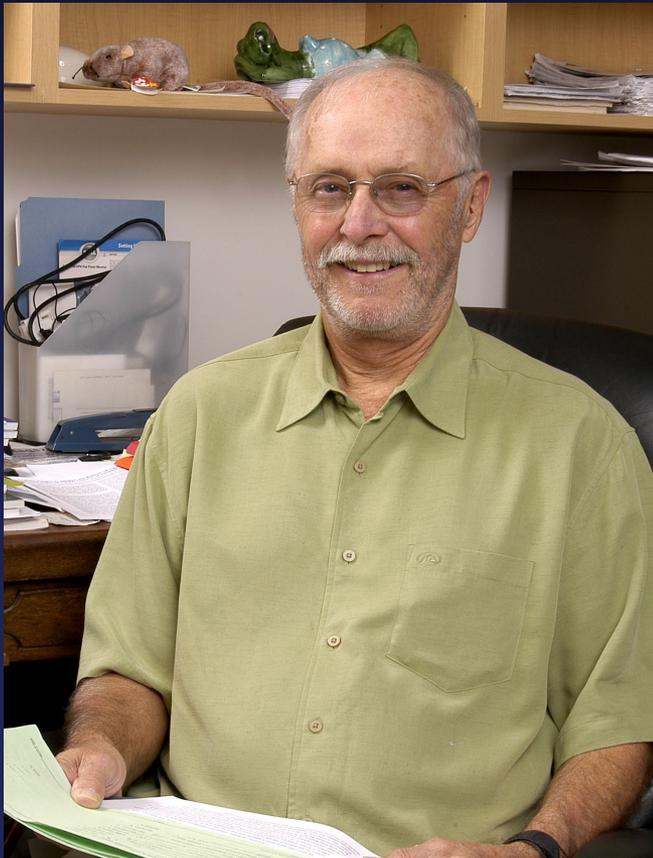
**Dr. Sally Anderson passed away on September 14, 2023. Dr. Anderson made major and seminal contributions to efforts in FASD, and for more than two decades was integral to the leadership of the Interagency Coordinating Committee on Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (ICCFASD).**

**Dr. Anderson joined NIAAA in 2002 as Deputy Director of the Division of Basic Research, and subsequently served as the interim Acting Director of the Division of Neuroscience and Behavior. In 2005, Dr. Anderson was appointed the ICCFASD Scientific Coordinator and Executive Secretary, and in 2016 she became a Special Advisor to the ICCFASD Leadership, a position she held until her retirement in 2021.**

**Dr. Anderson was an esteemed colleague, mentor, and member of the NIAAA family. Her drive to increase awareness of FASD, and her desire to help address the real-life challenges faced by individuals with FASD has benefited the individuals affected and their families. She will be deeply missed.**

# In Memoriam: George Robert Siggins, PhD

**Dr. George Robert “G-Bob” Siggins, professor emeritus at The Scripps Research Institute in La Jolla, CA, passed away on September 22, 2023.**



*Photo Courtesy of Scripps Research*

**Dr. Siggins was an outstanding neuroscientist who made many seminal contributions to the addiction field, including demonstrating that alcohol had cellular actions that could be linked to specific key neurocircuits and yield effects on alcohol-related reward, withdrawal, and craving.**

**He was also a very accomplished musician, having co-founded the Charles River Valley Boys bluegrass group and performing with leading figures such as folk legend Joan Baez.**

**Dr. Siggins was a remarkable man, a kind and supportive mentor, and a good friend. He will be dearly missed.**

# INSTITUTE UPDATES

# NIH Welcomes Monica Bertagnolli, M.D. as its New Director

- Dr. Bertagnolli took office as the 17<sup>th</sup> Director of NIH on November 9<sup>th</sup>.
- Dr. Bertagnolli articulated the following principles to help guide NIH's work:
  - Our work is not finished when we deliver scientific discoveries. Our work is finished when all people are living long and healthy lives.
  - NIH research encompasses the laboratory, the clinic, and the community. Patients are partners in discovery.
    - To tackle the most persistent and complex problems, NIH aims to bring more members of the public into the research enterprise as our partners in discovery.
    - Income, age, race, ethnicity, geographic location, and disability status should not be barriers to participating in research or to benefitting from research advances.



*National Institutes of Health*

# **Additional Guiding Principles Articulated by the NIH Director**

- **Progress is accelerated when advanced scientific methods, such as new data analytics, are applied to data that includes everyone, and when new discoveries are rapidly and equitably adopted in clinical care.**
- **NIH is committed to harnessing the power of artificial intelligence and machine learning to advance research across diverse fields, diseases, and scientific communities.**
  - **Advanced scientific methods, new data analytics and technologies are unlocking possibilities to harness data in ways that achieve faster and more definitive results.**
  - **NIH has launched and will continue to launch innovative and ambitious initiatives to propel fusion of biomedicine and artificial intelligence.**



# NIAAA Budget

- **NIAAA closed the fiscal year 2023 on Sept. 30th. The final appropriation for NIAAA was \$595.3 million, a 3.8% increase over 2022 budget level.**
- **The Budget for fiscal year 2024 has not yet been finalized. NIAAA is currently operating under a Continuing Resolution, which extends current funding levels until March 8th.**

# NIAAA Funding Opportunities

*(See Director's Report for Complete Listing)*

- **Comprehensive Alcohol-HIV/AIDS Research Center:** To support research center grants that conduct a range of basic and behavioral cross-cutting, intervention, and translational research in alcohol and HIV/AIDS. These Centers must include a dissemination core to initiate and expand community education related to the activities of the Center. (P60, RFA-AA-23-004) *Contact: Dr. Kendall Bryant*
- **Prevention and Intervention Approaches for Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD):** To encourage new studies that propose new strategies for evidence-based prevention of FASD or intervention/treatments for individuals affected by FASD throughout the lifespan. (R34, PAR-24-067 and R61/33, PAR-24-068) *Contacts: Drs. Tatiana Balachova, William Dunty, Elizabeth Powell, Deidra Roach*

# NIAAA Funding Opportunities (Continued)

- **Alcohol Research-Related Resource Award:** To seek applications for investigator-initiated resources designed to provide materials and services to support and advance alcohol biomedical, behavioral, and social sciences research on a national basis. (R24, [PAR-24-071](#)) *Contact: Dr. Gary Murray*
- **High-Throughput Screening Platform for Discovery of Medications to Treat Alcohol Use Disorder:** To seek proposals for the development of a new, or optimization of an existing, *in vivo* and/or *in vitro* high-throughput screening platform for use in identifying potential compounds for treating alcohol use disorder. (R43/R44) ([RFA-AA-24-001](#)), (R41/R42) ([RFA-AA-24-002](#)). *Contact: Dr. Sarah Maggio.*

# NIAAA Notices of Interest

- **Epidemiology and Prevention in Alcohol Research:** NIAAA is seeking applications to advance basic, applied, translational, and methodological research on the epidemiology and prevention of alcohol misuse and related behaviors. (NOT-AA-23-018). *Contact: Dr. Robert Freeman.*
- Notice of Intent to Publish a Funding Opportunity for **Model Continuums of Care Initiative to Advance Health Equity Among Women and Girls in Racial/Ethnic Minority and Other Marginalized Communities.** The overarching goal of this initiative is to advance health equity and end health disparities among racial and ethnic minorities and other underserved women and girls. (NOT-AA-24-002). *Contact: Dr. Deidra Roach.*

# Advancing Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility in the Research Workforce

**NIAAA is participating in several funding opportunities across the career spectrum:**

- **Ruth L. Kirschstein National Research Service Award (NRSA) Individual Predoctoral Fellowship to Promote Diversity in Health-Related Research (Parent F31-Diversity), (PA-23-271).**
- **Providing Research Education Experiences to Enhance Inclusivity for a Diverse Substance Use and Addiction Scientific Workforce (R25), (PAR-24-048).**
- **Research Supplements to Promote Re-Entry, Re-integration into, and Re-training in Health-Related Research Careers, (NOT-OD-23-170).**

# Advancing Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility in Research

**NIAAA is participating in several funding opportunities to increase research on health disparities:**

- **Health of Women of Understudied, Underrepresented and Underreported Populations (Admin Supp), NOT-OD-24-032.**
- **Screening, Brief Intervention and Referral to Treatment or Prevention for Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drugs in Adult Populations that Experience Health Disparities (R01), PAR-23-270.**
- **Intervention Research to Improve Native American Health: (R34), PAR-23-285; (R01), PAR-23-298; (R21), PAR-23-299.**
- **Health and Health Care Disparities Among Persons Living with Disabilities (R01), PAR-23-309.**
- **Multi-sectoral Preventive Interventions that Address Social Determinants of Health in Populations that Experience Health Disparities (UG3/UH3), PAR-24-053.**
- **Addressing Health and Health Care Disparities among Sexual and Gender Minority Populations (R01), PAR-24-077.**

# Recent NIAAA Scientific Meetings and Resources

- NIAAA and the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) held the annual **NIDA-NIAAA Frontiers in Addiction Research Mini-Convention** on November 7-8, 2023. Scientific sessions included “Alcohol and Substance Use Disorders and the Glymphatic System”, “Glial Cells and Neuroimmune Mechanisms in Substance Use Disorders”, and “Using Neuroscience to Inform Prevention Interventions for Substance Use”.
- NIAAA held a webinar on **“Harnessing Technology and Social Media to Address Alcohol Misuse in Adolescents and Emerging Adults”** on December 13, 2023, to discuss adolescent alcohol use and new prevention and intervention research involving telehealth, social media, and other methods.
- The **Alcohol Policy Information System (APIS)** was updated on December 27, 2023, to include legislative and regulatory changes in state policies pertaining to alcohol and recreational use of cannabis that took effect on or before January 1, 2023. Supplemental resources provided through the APIS website were added or revised.

# What's Ahead

## ABCD Insights & Innovations Meeting (AIIM)

March 4-5, 2024

Day 1 • 9:30 a.m. – 10:30 a.m. – Poster and Mentoring Sessions

11:00 a.m. – 5:30 p.m. – General Session

Day 2 • 9:30 a.m. – 10:30 a.m. – Poster and Mentoring Sessions

11:00 a.m. – 3:15 p.m. – General Session

In-person: Natcher Auditorium  
NIH Campus, Bethesda, Maryland



Adolescent Brain Cognitive Development  
*Teen Brains. Today's Science. Brighter Future.*



WELCOME   ABSTRACT SOLICITATION   REGISTRATION   LOCATION INFORMATION

On March 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>, the **ABCD Insights & Innovations Meeting** will bring together researchers who are leveraging the open science data from the ABCD Study® to share innovative findings and emerging insights about adolescent development. The ABCD Study® is the largest long-term study of brain development and child health in the United States.

For more information: <https://apps1.seiservices.com/aiim/Default.aspx>

# What's Ahead (Continued)



An NIAAA workshop on **Reducing Alcohol-Associated Liver Disease Burden through Early Screening and Management in the General Population** will be held on April 17-18, 2024, at the NIH Main Campus.

The workshop will provide a forum for presentations and discussions on the prevention of severe alcohol-associated liver disease.

*For more information contact Dr. Joe Wang, [wangh4@mail.nih.gov](mailto:wangh4@mail.nih.gov)*

# Public Awareness: Dry January

NIAAA participated in more than 68 media interviews from August through January and a 'Dry January' Satellite Media tour, which discussed behaviors during the holidays that may be signs of a problem with alcohol and the benefits of Dry January. The Satellite Media Tour included interviews with 17 media outlets.

## Is your 'holiday buzz' impacting your kids? Remember: 'They're constantly watching'



**Adrianna Rodriguez**

USA TODAY

Published 5:08 a.m. ET Dec. 26, 2023 | Updated 10:48 a.m. ET Jan. 2, 2024

**The Washington Post**

## Women Are Drinking More Alcohol and It's Killing Them

Analysis by Lisa Jarvis | Bloomberg  
August 15, 2023 at 8:18 a.m. EDT

X@NIAAAnews

In this TIME feature, NIAAA Director Dr. George F. Koob and other experts discuss research on why cutting back or quitting #alcohol can improve your health.



GEORGE F. KOOB, PHD  
NIAAA DIRECTOR

"If you **stop drinking** for a week or two and **feel better**, and you're starting to **sleep better** and your interactions with your family are better, then **listen to your body**. It's trying to tell you something."

.....

TIME, 12-27-2023

# Public Awareness: Supporting Recovery in the Workforce

In September and October, NIAAA participated in two events raising awareness on alcohol and substance use risks and recovery in the workforce.

- For the International Association of Firefighters webinar, we reviewed risk factors for alcohol misuse in the fire service and resources for treatment and recovery.
- Discussions at the *Shaping our Appalachian Region Summit* in Eastern Kentucky focused on the importance of economic opportunities in preventing alcohol misuse and supporting recovery.



## Exploring Alcohol Use Disorder in the Fire Service: Risks and Recovery

IAFF Behavioral Health Team  
National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA)

## SOARSUMMIT23

Presented By



### 2023 Summit By The Numbers

**1270+**  
attendees

**420+**  
companies

**40+**  
speakers

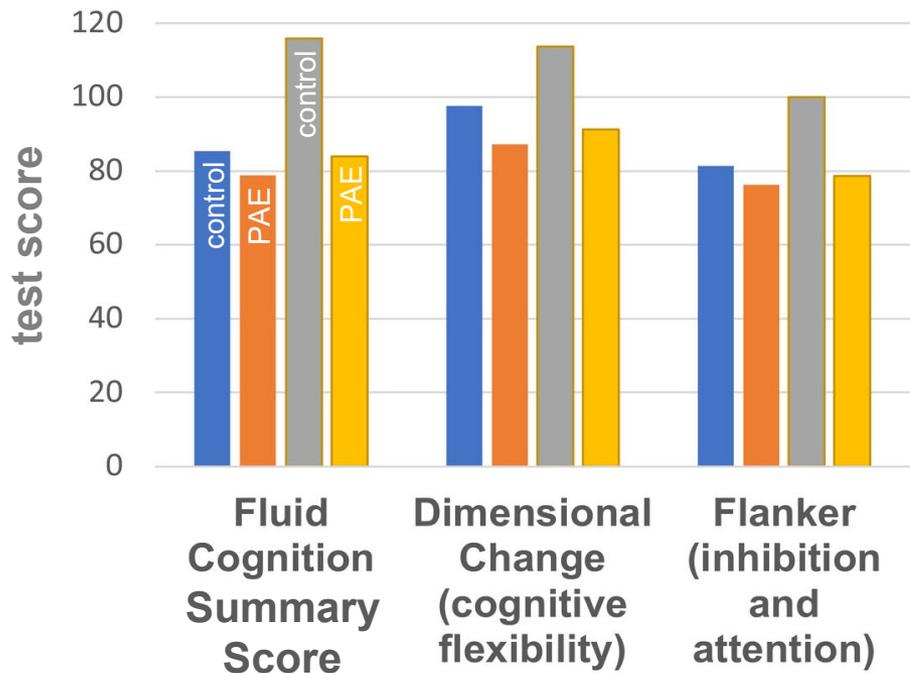
**16**  
states

# RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

# Prenatal Alcohol Exposure Causes Deficits in Cognitive Abilities into Middle Age

Researchers studied 200 participants from longitudinal cohorts in Atlanta (mean age 36) and Seattle (mean age 41) to assess whether prenatal alcohol exposure (PAE) is linked to cognitive impairments in middle adulthood and whether such impairments are bigger in individuals with dysmorphic features.

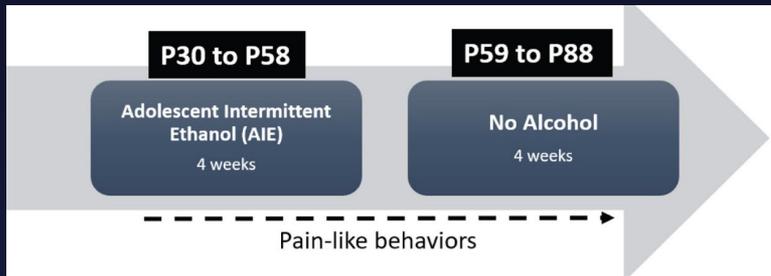
NIH Toolbox Fluid Cognition Battery



**PAE was linked to lower Fluid Cognition Summary scores. In addition, only those with dysmorphic features showed deficits in inhibition, attention, and cognitive flexibility. In conclusion, PAE is associated with persistent cognitive impairments in middle adulthood, particularly in individuals with dysmorphic features.**

■ Atlanta Control (n=41) ■ Atlanta PAE (n=56) ■ Seattle Control (n=31) ■ Seattle PAE (n=72)

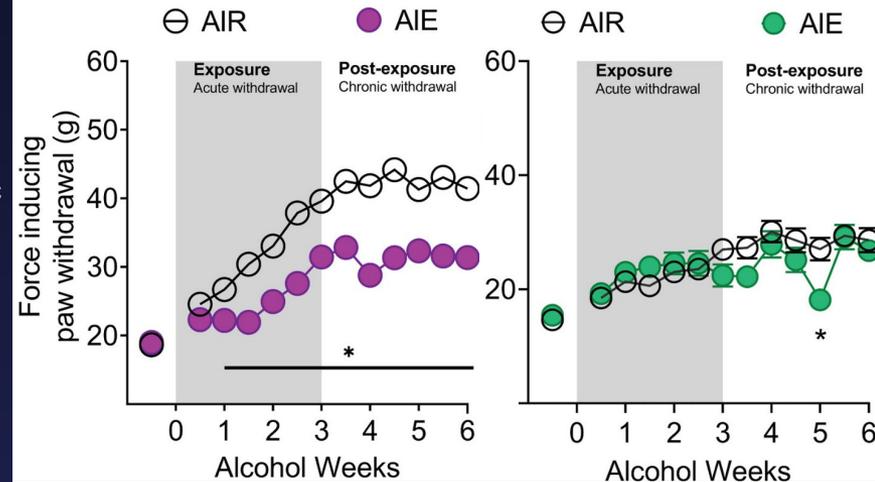
# Chronic Adolescent Alcohol Exposure is Associated with Sex-specific Pain-related Behaviors and Neurocircuitry



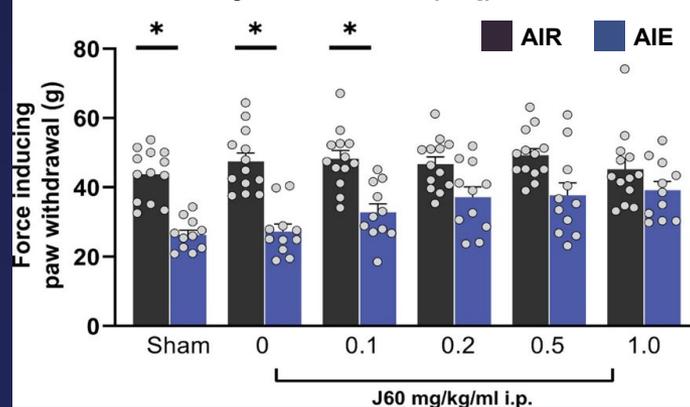
In a rat model, researchers showed that chronic alcohol exposure during adolescence caused an increased sensitivity to pain both during adolescence and into adulthood, even after abstinence, **in males but not females**. Chronic adolescent alcohol exposure resulted in alterations in a pain-related brain neurocircuit which was reversed by circuit activation in male rats.

AIR=Control  
AIE=Chronic alcohol intermittent exposure

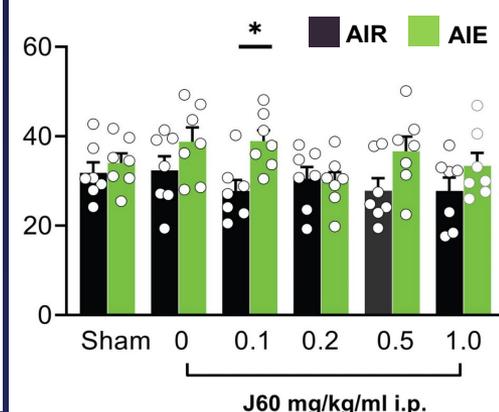
Von Frey (Pain) Test:, Males (left) vs Females (right)



Von Frey Test, hM4D(Gq) - Male

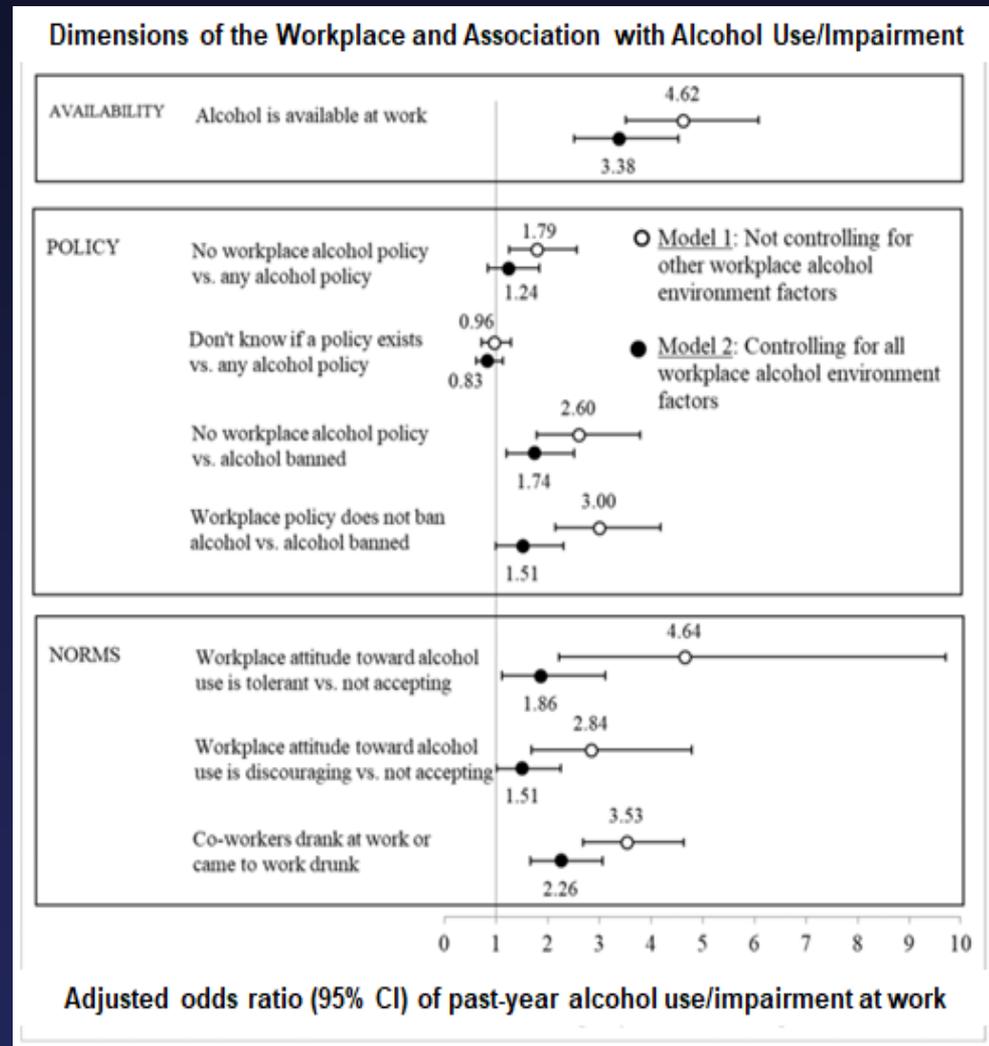


Von Frey Test, hM4D(Gi) - Female



# Alcohol-Tolerant Workplaces are Associated with Greater Risk for Alcohol Use and Impairment Among Young Adults

The workplace is an understudied setting for young adult alcohol prevention. This study assessed three main dimensions of the workplace--**availability of alcohol, absence of written alcohol policy, and alcohol-tolerant norms and attitudes**--and each were independently associated with a 1.5 to 3x greater odds of on-the-job alcohol use or impairment. Workplace alcohol-tolerance norms were also associated with greater young adults' risk for hazardous drinking, including outside of work. These results suggest the workplace could be an important setting for alcohol misuse prevention.



# The AUDIT-C has Excellent Test-Retest Reliability in Routine Primary Care

In this study, more than 18,000 adult primary care patients completed two AUDIT-C screens 1–21 days apart. Reliability coefficients of >0.75 indicated “excellent” reliability.

Researchers found that AUDIT-C screens have excellent test-retest reliability in real-world care conditions and across demographic subgroups and modalities (online and in-clinic). Future research should examine why reliability varies slightly across modalities and demographic subgroups.

Test–retest reliability coefficients for AUDIT-C's completed in routine care					
	AUDIT-C score (0–12)	Unhealthy alcohol use (score ≥3/4 for women/men)	Item 1 (drinking frequency)	Item 2 (drinking intensity)	Item 3 (heavy drinking freq.)
<b>Full Sample</b>	<b>0.87</b>	<b>0.79</b>	<b>0.88</b>	<b>0.74</b>	<b>0.77</b>
<b>Age group</b>					
18-24	0.84	0.74	0.84	0.7	0.73
25-44	0.87	0.78	0.86	0.75	0.78
45-64	0.87	0.81	0.89	0.73	0.77
65+	0.89	0.85	0.92	0.69	0.68
<b>Sex</b>					
Female	0.86	0.79	0.87	0.73	0.76
Male	0.87	0.79	0.88	0.74	0.79
<b>Race</b>					
Asian/Asian American	0.86	0.77	0.86	0.72	0.74
Black/African American	0.87	0.74	0.83	0.76	0.76
American Indian/ Alaskan Native	0.82	0.69	0.84	0.75	0.73
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0.91	0.86	0.89	0.84	0.77
White	0.88	0.8	0.89	0.74	0.79
Multi-racial	0.82	0.76	0.83	0.7	0.71
Other	0.84	0.69	0.84	0.73	0.7
Unknown	0.85	0.79	0.85	0.71	0.75
<b>Ethnicity</b>					
Hispanic	0.86	0.72	0.84	0.72	0.75
Non-Hispanic	0.87	0.8	0.88	0.74	0.77
Unknown	0.87	0.79	0.86	0.74	0.79

# REMINDER OF NIAAAA RESOURCES

# NIAAA Web Resources For Youth

**NIAAA for Middle School:** Contains interactive activities to help parents, caregivers, and teachers introduce and reinforce key messages about peer pressure, resistance skills and other topics related to underage drinking.

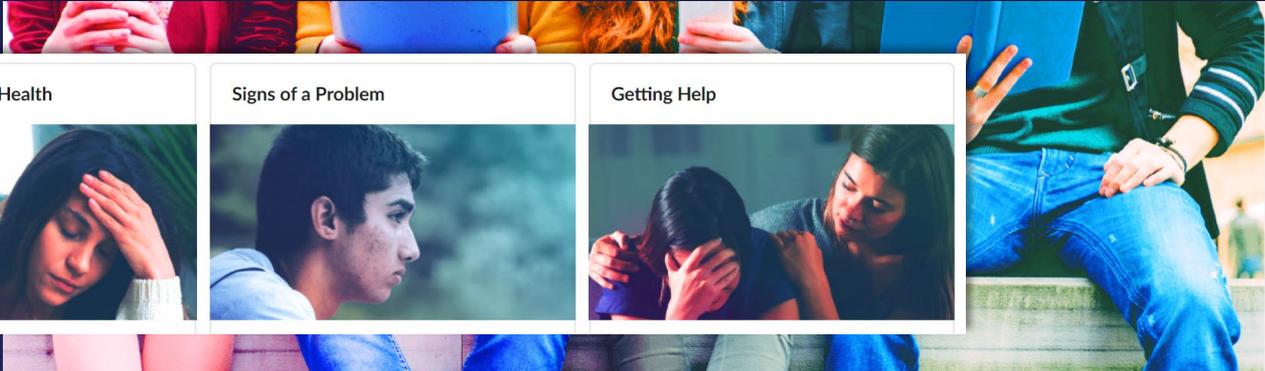
In this Section

- Too Soon = Too Dangerous
- Peer Pressure
- The Right to Resist
- Helpful Resources

NIAAA for Middle School



**NIAAA for Teens:** A research-based online resource for teens highlighting how alcohol affects your health, warning signs and symptoms, and where to get help for alcohol-related problems.



Alcohol and Your Health



Signs of a Problem



Getting Help



# Resources for the Public and Healthcare Professionals

## Rethinking Drinking

A website and print publication for a general audience to help individuals assess their drinking habits and find ways to make a change.



## CollegeAIM

Comprehensive information on prevention approaches found to be effective in college environments.



## Alcohol Treatment Navigator

Helps individuals understand treatment options and search for nearby treatment, including telehealth services. It also includes a portal to assist health care providers in making referrals for their patients.



## Healthcare Professional Core Resource

Online educational resource covers the basics of what every healthcare professional needs to know about alcohol, including the many ways that alcohol can impact a patient's health, and provides strategies for alcohol screening and interventions.



[niaaa.nih.gov](http://niaaa.nih.gov)

# THANK YOU!

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## Special thanks to:

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Van Van

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