

Silicon Valley Frat House Bros Found To Be Clinically Addicted Drunks

Frat Brothers Are Immune to Alcohol Intervention Programs, Study Suggests

by Linda Carroll

Fraternity members who party hard are unlikely to change their boozy behavior any time soon, even with proven methods of reducing alcohol abuse, a new study suggests.

Tried and true interventions have little impact on frat brothers, says the study, published Thursday in *Health Psychology*. The findings were a surprise, according to the study's lead author.

"It was unexpected," Lori Scott-Sheldon, an associate professor at the Brown University Medical School and a senior scientist at the Miriam Hospital, told NBC News. "We thought they would work as they did in the broader student population. It may just be more challenging to act on your intentions if the environment endorses alcohol use."

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Images in pop culture of free-flowing alcohol in frat houses, depicted in movies from "Animal House" to "Neighbors," are often not too far from the truth. And it's the celebration of heavy consumption that researchers like Scott-Sheldon are most worried about, because it can lead to tragedies like the death of Nicholas Holt, 18, a freshman at Stony Brook University this spring. Holt was brought to a Long Island Hospital from a frat party with a high blood alcohol level and died there.



In movies such as 2014 "Neighbors," free-flowing alcohol regularly flows in frat houses. Those depictions in pop culture may not be too far from the truth, and don't help the cause of preventing alcohol overdoses, experts say. Universal Pictures

The new study combined data from 15 earlier, smaller studies, in what is known as a meta-analysis. Those studies examined the success rates of 21 different interventions in fraternity members.

"The interventions included such things as education about alcohol, personalized feedback on alcohol use and strategies to reduce drinking, such as alternating alcohol with water," Scott-Sheldon said.

While there were data from sororities, too, the numbers were too small "for them to be generalizable," Scott-Sheldon said.

The researchers suspect that the situation isn't hopeless and that future interventions that include input from Greek leaders might be more effective.

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That might suggest a role for organizations like the Association of Fraternity/Sorority Advisors. But when contacted by NBC News, Andrea Starks-Corbin, a spokesperson for the organization, said the AFA was "unable to provide a comment at this time." The organization said it would comment at a later date.

But there are examples out there, such as the University of Pennsylvania, where the committee that developed alcohol policy included members of fraternities and sororities, said Dr. Charles O'Brien, a professor of Psychiatry and the founding Director of the Center for the Studies of Addiction at Perelman School of Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania.

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