

## Substance use in the armed forces: A look at alcohol and drug misuse in the US military

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Alcohol use and misuse is a problem in the U.S. military. In the 2008 Department of Defense Survey of Health Related Behaviors among Active Duty Personnel (HRB), 20% of respondents indicated that they were heavy users of alcohol. This trend has showed a steady increase since 1998 (15%). Isolating these heavy drinking cohorts into age, gender, race and geographic subsets may provide insights and leadership strategies to reduce high risk choices.

Using standard epidemiological analytics, heavy alcohol use will be examined by cohort and consequence. Although much data exists about alcohol use in the U.S. military, there is sparse data that examines alcohol misuse in epidemiological terms that provide insights into prevention. This paper looks at data from the 2008 HRB that may provide guidance for prevention programs to reduce problem drinking and related negative consequences among military personnel.

Binge drinking as well as possible dependency over the past year and age of onset of alcohol use were examined. All pair-wise comparisons (groups) were examined. The Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test, Version C assisted in determining self-reported alcohol use into harmful, hazardous, possibly dependent and responsible use. We present descriptive findings of rates of alcohol and drug use, misuse and possible dependency. Rates of alcohol use and misuse by service, rank, gender, region, race/ethnicity and geographic region are also reported, along with comparisons of drinking category (low, medium and heavy) with serious consequences. These comparative data are the first to characterize in epidemiological terms key aspects of alcohol misuse in the U.S. military using 2008 HRB data.

Data can be used in screening, prevention and clinical programs. Determining groups and subsets of groups, these insights can permit interventionists tools to react to heavy drinking environments before serious consequences occur.

### Biography

Mark Mattiko is the Substance Abuse Program Manager for the United States Coast. He is one of the Principle Investigators (PI) for the 2008 Department of Defense Survey of Health Related Behaviors among Active Duty Military Personnel and one of the PI's for the 2011 State of the Behavioral Health of the Armed Forces Survey. Before joining the Coast Guard, Mr. Mattiko was a Clinical Research Scientist in the Department of Rehabilitation Medicine Department, Clinical Center, National Institutes of Health, Bethesda, MD for 17 years. He has multiple publications and is a peer reviewer for several journals.

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## Spiritual healing: Recovery from addiction

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The concept of spiritual healing and recovery from addiction has, until recently, received scant scholarly attention within and beyond the psychological sciences, despite its potential to unify a number of lines of inquiry. Presently, the research literature on spiritual healing is conceptually underdeveloped and dispersed across a range of domains of application, from theology and education, to health. In this paper I intend to clarify and distinguish spiritual healing within the broader conceptual framework of healing and recovery, and within the context of a 12 Step programme and a Faith Based (Christian) Therapeutic Community. The author draws on her own personal experiences of healing and recovery from addiction within these two therapeutic modalities. I examine recent evidence from the field of psychosocial cognitive neuroscience that identifies the potential neural links between healing and recovery from addiction. I conclude by identifying a number of theoretical and methodological challenges associated with the valid and reliable assessment of spiritual healing as a basis for future research in this burgeoning field of inquiry.

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