

# An increasing proportion of women who are 60+ years of age are drinking

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Most older Americans drink alcohol. Given that this segment of the population is projected to almost double by 2050, reaching 112 million, in the future, there will likely be many more older drinkers in the United States than currently. Importantly, older individuals are more sensitive to alcohol's effects than their younger counterparts, and are also more likely to take prescription medications that can interact negatively with alcohol, potentially leading to falls and other injuries. This study examined trends in drinking status among U.S. adults 60 years of age and older.

Researchers analyzed data from the 1997-2014 National Health Interview Surveys: 65,303 respondents 60 [years](#) of age and older (31,803 men, 33,500 women) were current drinkers; 6,570 men and 1,737 women were binge drinkers. Analysis of respondents by sex, age group, and birth cohort showed differing trends over time.

The observed upward trends in drinking among adults 60 years of age and older, particularly women, are of public health concern. Among [older men](#), the prevalence of current drinking trended upward an average of 0.7 percent per year, while average volume and the prevalence of [binge drinking](#) remained stable. Among [older women](#), the prevalence of current drinking trended upward an average of 1.6 percent per year, while average volume remained stable; moreover, the prevalence of binge drinking increased an average of 3.7 percent per year. These findings indicate a need for alcohol-related public-health education, screening, and treatment for the growing older population.

**More information:** Rosalind A. Breslow et al. Trends in Alcohol Consumption Among Older Americans: National Health Interview Surveys, 1997 to 2014, *Alcoholism: Clinical and Experimental Research* (2017). [DOI: 10.1111/acer.13365](https://doi.org/10.1111/acer.13365)

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