Why is alcohol considered the most dangerous drug?

Here are some of the problems related to use of alcohol in the United States:

- 90% of all campus rapes involve drinking on the part of the assailant, victim or both.
- 68% of manslaughter convictions and 63% of assaults involve alcohol.
- 63% of episodes in which husbands batter their wives involve alcohol.

- 46% of highway deaths involve alcohol.
- 50% of college men and 39% of college women said they had binged (consuming 4-5 successive drinks at least once in the last two weeks). Two-thirds of students who drink are binge drinkers, which cause 60% of all alcohol related problems on campus.
- 35% of college students today drink to get drunk, whereas 15 years ago the figure was 10%.

- 11% of all workplace accidents involve alcohol.
- 8-21% of suicides involve alcohol.
- 7% of college freshmen who drop out do so because of alcohol.
- It is estimated that 14 million Americans have serious alcohol problems. About half of these people (7 million) are considered alcoholic (they are physically addicted to alcohol).
• Alcoholism is the third leading health problem after cancer and heart disease.
• Alcohol is the third leading cause of birth defects that result in mental retardation—the only preventable one.
• Alcohol is the most serious problem facing U.S. high schools, surpassing apathy and poor discipline by a wide margin.
• Alcoholism and alcohol abuse cost an estimated $136 billion per year to lost production, health and welfare services, property damage and medical expenses.
What other problems are associated with alcohol and binge drinking?

Binge drinking (defined as five or more drinks in a row for men, and four for women) has become a major problem on many college campuses. Students who binge, report missing classes, getting behind in school work, engaging in unplanned or unprotected sex, and/or other activities they will regret later.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>As a result of SOMEONE ELSE’S binge drinking behavior, have you ever experienced:</th>
<th>Low Binge Campuses</th>
<th>High Binge Campuses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Being insulted or humiliated?</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unwanted sexual advances (women)?</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having a serious argument or quarrel?</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being pushed, hit or assaulted?</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having your studying or sleep interrupted?</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having to “babysit” a drunken student?</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having your personal property damaged?</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual assault or “date rape”</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Wallendael and Matlin, 3rd Edition)
SAMHSA
(Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration)
Report on Binge Drinking

(www.health.org/govpubs/rpo995)

• Frequent Binge drinkers are 8 times more likely than non-binge drinkers to miss a class, fall behind in school work, get hurt or injured, and damage property.
• Nearly one of every five teenagers (16%) has experienced “blackout” spells where they could not remember what happened the previous evening due to heavy binge drinking. More than 60% of college men and 50% of college women who are frequent binge drinkers report that they drink and drive.
• Binge drinking during high school, especially among males, is strongly predictive of binge drinking in college.
• Binge drinking during college may be associated with mental health disorders such as compulsiveness, depression or anxiety, or early deviant behavior.
• In a national study, 91% of the women and 78% of the men who were frequent binge drinkers considered themselves to be moderate or light drinkers.
Why do people abuse drugs?

What is the difference between drug use and drug abuse (recurring drug use that results in disruptions in academic, social, or occupational functioning or in legal or psychological problems)?

What factors are involved with drug abuse?

- Social and cultural norms that are favorable toward drug taking
- Availability and cost of the drug
- Drug-taking behavior of role models and family members
- Occupational, social and academic problems
- Association with drug-using peers
- Rebelliousness or alienation from society as a whole

Most people know the risks with alcohol and tobacco, yet they use and sometimes abuse these drugs.

Why?