Alcohol Consumption and the College Experience: How Safe are Students When They Drink?
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**Background**
Research states that “approximately 40% of college students nationwide are high risk drinkers during college (Demb, et al). College high risk drinkers are grouped into two categories, time limited and adult persistent. For the purpose of this research we focused on time limited high risk drinking that usually fades out after college. One variable that has been consistently shown to be associated with less alcohol use and fewer alcohol related problems is use of protective behavioral strategies.(Martens, et al).

Protective behavioral strategies are considered to be effective in preventing negative consequences while drinking. Such actions include
- Drinking water in between alcoholic drinks
- Keeping count of drinks consumed
- Not drinking on an empty stomach
- Avoiding drinking games etc.

**Methods**
**Survey**
- We created a survey on Qualtrics and emailed it out to 1,000 UW-Stout students.
- Our survey contained 33 questions that related to safety when drinking
- We had 306 respondents.

**Observations**
- We observed drinking habits at local bars.
- We also observed drinking patterns on Advisement Day Eve.
- We coded our observations and added it to our qualitative data

**Common Negative Consequences**
- Damage to Property
- Sexual relations/assault
- Binge Eating
- Social Media Mistakes
- Police Interactions
- Cheating/relations with an ex
- Fights, Verbal and Physical
- Blackout/Puke

**Results**
96% of the respondents stated that they have drank alcohol

**Gender**
- On average males consume more drinks and reported more negative consequences
- Males are more likely to keep count of drinks

**Relationship Status**
- Single people are more likely to go out alone and be part of a bar league
- People in a relationship are more likely to eat before drinking

**Age**
- Younger respondents are more likely to bar hop and consume more drinks
- Older respondents have reported their habits have changed

Respondents reported higher negative consequences when they:
- When using a fake ID you are more likely to regret something you have done while drinking
- Drank more
- Used a fake I.D.
- Didn’t eat before going out
- Didn’t keep track of drinks consumed
- Respondents that reported a negative consequence were 629% more likely to want to change their habits

**Qualitative Survey Responses**
- “I rarely drink now because of the many experiences I’ve been through”
- “I've blacked out many times, been arrested”
- “A hook-up that wouldn't have happened otherwise”
- “Drove home when I should not have, realized after getting home that I should not have been driving”
- “I have ended up in a guys’ apartment in a different city with no recollection of what happened or how I got there”
- “I am now choosing to be sober for my own safety and to maintain control of myself”

**Conclusion**
- Our large sample size enabled us to be confident in the results
- It appears that students are learning from their mistakes
- UW-Stout students can benefit from using Protective Behavioral Strategies
- There is a need to educate young adults on safety and consumption of alcohol