



# Longitudinal Patterns of Military Spouse Alcohol Consumption

Findings from the Millennium Cohort Family Study

The Millennium Cohort Family Study, sponsored by the Defense Health Agency, is the largest study to-date examining health outcomes among military spouses. Recently this study examined risky drinking behavior among military spouses over a period of three years and found:

## Definition of risky drinking



### Men

15+ alcoholic drinks in a typical week or 5+ drinks on at least one occasion in the past year



### Women

8+ alcoholic drinks in a typical week or 4+ drinks on at least one occasion in the past year

Most spouses  
had healthy  
drinking habits.

19%  
reported risky  
drinking by the  
final assessment.

9%  
escalated into risky  
drinking by the final  
assessment.

13%  
de-escalated away  
from risky drinking by  
the final assessment.

## Factors associated with risky drinking behavior among military spouses over time:



Male sex



Cigarette use



Younger age



Having a military partner  
exposed to combat  
while deployed



Prior alcohol use



Symptoms of post-traumatic  
stress, particularly combined  
with depression



Recent marital separation

When your family is experiencing stress, such as a difficult deployment or family relationship problems, it is important to find healthy ways to cope. If you feel you are experiencing trouble with drinking, please visit the following:

- [The Military Crisis Line](#)
- [Military OneSource](#)
- [Military and Family Support Centers](#)

Sparks, A. C., Williams, C. S., Pflieger, J. C., Jacobson, I. G., Corry, N. H., Radakrishnan, S., & Stander, V. A. (2022). Longitudinal patterns of military spousal alcohol consumption: Findings from the Millennium Cohort Family Study. *Journal of Studies on Alcohol and Drugs*, 83(4), pp. 10.



The Millennium Cohort Family Study follows spouses of junior military personnel for up to 21 years to help the Department of Defense understand the needs of families and provide better support.

