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Alcohol use among firefighters in the Central United States FREE

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Abstract

Background

Although the US National Fire Service is concerned about alcohol use among firefighters, little research has been conducted on the topic.

Aims

To survey alcohol use patterns among career and volunteer firefighters.

Methods

Data were from a population-based cohort study of male firefighters conducted in randomly selected career and volunteer departments. Data were collected from 2008 to 2010.

Results

There were 656 participants from 11 career and volunteer 13 departments included in the study with a response rate of 97%. Career firefighters drank approximately 10 days per month (just about half of their off duty days) and drank relatively heavily on those days. Fifty-eight per cent of career and 40% of volunteer firefighters averaged three or more drinks and similar percentages reported binge drinking on the days they consumed alcohol. In general, firefighters who drank but did not binge drink tended to have the best health outcomes, while those who binge drank typically were at highest risk of negative health outcomes. Nine per cent of career and 10% of volunteer firefighters who drank self-reported driving while intoxicated in the previous 30 days.

Conclusions

Given the high rates of heavy and binge drinking, local and nationally coordinated efforts to increase the surveillance of drinking behaviour among firefighters and the development of targeted prevention interventions are critically needed.

Keywords: [Drinking](#), [fire service](#), [health](#)

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