

## Some Sobering Information about Drunk Driving

An article entitled "Drunk Driving" was featured on the "Insurance Information Institute" website in February of 2007. Pardon the pun, but the following three statistical facts that were discussed in this article are quite "sobering."

### Alcohol-Related Fatalities

First, in spite of increasing the number of anti-drunk driving laws and campaigns, the number of people who died in alcohol-related accidents went down by only .2% from 2004 to 2005 (16,919 in 2004 versus 16,885 in 2005). While every life saved is important, this decrease, from a statistical standpoint, however, was not significant. In other words, the fact that 34 fewer people died in alcohol-related accidents in 2005 than in 2004 could have happened totally by chance rather than because of stricter drunk driving laws or because of the influence of citizen activist groups such as Mothers Against Drunk Drivers (MADD).

### Repeat DUI Offenders

Second, even with the passing of stricter DUI laws and consequences, over 50% of US drivers arrested for drunk driving are repeat offenders. This statistic is disturbing when viewed on its own merits. What has also become "newsworthy," however, is the number of repeat offenders who have received an outrageous number of DUIs.

For instance in early 2006, an Ohio man who received 12 DUIs within a ten-year period of time killed two Hiram college students in an alcohol-related accident. Not surprisingly, many people in the local community were outraged with the driver who accidentally killed the two college students.

What was perhaps more revealing in this case, however, was the number of phone calls made to the radio talk shows by people asking who the judges and prosecutors were and what the consequences were for this driver after he received his 3rd, his 8th, and his 11th DUIs. In other words, people starting asking the "tough questions" regarding the accountability of those who received multiple DUIs as well as the accountability of the judges and prosecutors who were involved in the repeat offenders' legal proceedings.

### Many Drivers with Suspended Licenses Still Drive

Third, 67% of US drivers with suspended licenses still drive. From a logical standpoint, many people must be asking themselves how this is possible in an age of technological advancement that features capabilities such as "real-time" computer access to driver registration information that is available to the law enforcement community.

### Drunk Driving Countermeasures

According to the authors of "Drunk Driving," a number of countermeasures have been undertaken that have targeted alcohol-related fatalities on the US roads. For instance, existing drunk driving laws have become stricter, new laws have been passed, drunk driving task forces have been established by many states, and citizen activist groups such as MADD have influenced some of the attitudes toward drinking and driving in our society.

As noteworthy as these anti-drunk driving laws and campaigns have been, however, the fact remains that only 34 fewer people died in alcohol-related accidents in 2005 than in 2004. Obviously, other measures must be undertaken in order to significantly reduce the number of US people who die in alcohol-related traffic accidents.

### Additional Anti-Drunk Driving Initiatives

In response to the need for more ammunition in the "war" on alcohol-related traffic accidents, I propose two additional anti-drunk driving initiatives. First, those who are incarcerated due to alcohol-related offenses need to receive mandatory alcoholism treatment while they are in jail or in prison. True, other drivers are safer when the offending persons are "off the streets" and incarcerated. When the jail or prison sentence is completed, however, the vast majority of alcohol-related offenders will return to the "real world." Acknowledging this reality, I submit that alcohol-related offenders who have received alcoholism treatment while incarcerated are more likely to become responsible people who refrain from drinking while driving and less likely to become repeat DUI offenders once they return to society.

Second, significant and observable changes in our attitudes about drinking alcohol need to take place in our society. Due to the fact that drinking

alcohol is so accessible, acceptable, and intimately ingrained in our society, however, it has been extremely difficult for many individuals, especially the youth, to truly understand the destructive, unhealthy, and fatal aspects of alcohol abuse and alcoholism. This needs to change.

#### Our Enlightened and Aware Society

Our society has become more enlightened and more aware of the health hazards, fatalities, and destructive consequences of alcohol abuse and alcoholism. It is therefore time for us to balance the prevailing marketing "message" with a more realistic and healthy perspective regarding alcohol consumption. Stated differently, drinking alcohol needs to be less advertised, less glamorized, and seen as less "cool" while the commercials, advertisements, and public service messages that emphasize healthy, safe, and alcohol-free activities and lifestyles need to be increased.

#### Conclusion

Obviously, something besides our current anti-drunk driving laws and campaigns needs to be done in order to significantly decrease the alcohol-related fatalities on our highways. I assert that mandatory alcoholism treatment for people who are incarcerated for alcohol-related offenses and noticeable and significant changes in our attitudes toward drinking alcohol are important factors that will help contribute to the significant reduction in the number of people in our society who die in alcohol-related traffic accidents every year.

Copyright 2007 - Denny Soinski. All Rights Reserved Worldwide. Reprint Rights: You may reprint this article as long as you leave all of the links active, do not edit the article in any way, and give the author credit.

Source: <http://www.articlecircle.com>

#### About the Author

Denny Soinski, Ph.D, writes about [heavy drinking, traffic fatalities, and alcohol abuse](#), alcohol addiction, alcohol testing, [alcohol treatment outcomes](#), alcoholism, alcohol recovery, alcohol treatment, and alcohol rehab. For more info, please visit [the shakes, eye-openers, and alcoholism](#) right away!