

participate in a set of three interviews across the academic year. Thirty-two students (16 drinkers, 16 abstainers) were randomly selected to take part. 28 interviews were completed in the two weeks following FW, 26 at the end of the first semester and 20 at the end of the second semester. Equal numbers of drinkers and abstainers were interviewed at each stage. Interviews were digitally audio-recorded, transcribed verbatim and analysed using the Framework approach.

Results Most drinkers came to university with the view that getting drunk was acceptable; some already had an established pattern of regular binge drinking. Upon arrival at university drinking became a more frequent feature for all, for some occurring on a near-daily basis during FW. Most students reported drinking in higher quantities. This in part appeared to be driven by students' expectations that university socialising is centralised around drinking, as well as the provision of daily nightclub events by the Students' Union which received more promotion over non-drinking focused social opportunities prior to and during FW. Alcohol remained a frequent part of socialising after FW, with a continued emphasis on drinking opportunities over alternative activities. Several abstainers reported feeling socially excluded due to the dearth of non-drinking focused social opportunities across the year, although some were able to quickly form friendships with other non-drinkers. Both drinkers and abstainers highlighted a need for there to be less emphasis on drinking throughout the year.

Conclusion Although many students come to university with established drinking patterns and expectations, the environment fosters binge drinking at the start of and throughout the academic year. Although this study was based on one university, the findings corroborate those found at others. They will be used to create recommendations on how to reduce problematic drinking in this population.

OP75 A QUALITATIVE EXPLORATION OF THE INTERSECTION BETWEEN SOCIAL INFLUENCE AND CULTURAL NORMS IN RELATION TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION PRACTICES DURING ADOLESCENCE

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Background Despite downward trends in alcohol consumption among young people in the UK, a substantial proportion drink and by the age of 17, at least half of young people report weekly drinking. Evidence regarding effects of school-based interventions to prevent harmful alcohol use is mixed and there remains a need for qualitative research to inform intervention development. We sought to explore young people's perspectives on behavioural and cultural influences relating to alcohol use and the socio-cultural context around alcohol consumption during mid-adolescence.

Methods Forty-two young people (n=21 males, n=21 females) were recruited from schools (n=30, aged 14–15 years) and youth groups (n=12, aged 14–18 years) in the West of England. In schools, participants were randomly selected from year 10 (aged 14–15) with snowball sampling used to maximise diversity of alcohol use, while additional participants were recruited from youth groups via youth workers. Data were collected via semi-structured one-to-one (n=25) and paired (n=4) interviews and one focus group. Interviews were

audio-recorded, transcribed verbatim and analysed thematically using NVivo 10.

Results Alcohol use was perceived as a normalised social practice in the wider population and parental influence, attitudes and the provision of alcohol underpinned adolescent attitudes and behaviour. In adolescence, alcohol consumption was associated with being cool, mature and popular, while enabling escape from reality and boosting confidence and enjoyment. Such positive expectancies alongside opportunity contributed to motivating initiation, but social influences were paramount for most, with participants describing a need to fit in or conform with friends to avoid social exclusion or derision. Such influences positioned drinking and intoxication at parties as a normative social practice, further providing opportunities for social learning and incentivising drinking through competition, associations with popularity, and a desire to avoid responsibility for intoxicated friends. Social media weaved into young people's lives the display of positive alcohol-associated depictions of social status, enjoyment and maturity. This intersection of influences, norms and incentives generated a pressurised environment, characterised by conformity being experienced as an obligation to drink, and a sense of unease around abstinence which elicited stigmatising insults.

Conclusion Social influences, cultural norms, incentives and social media contribute to development of a pressurised environment around alcohol consumption during mid-adolescence, driving the escalation of alcohol use as a normative social practice. Our findings highlight the need to acknowledge normative influence and the drivers of cultural norms and practices when developing new interventions to prevent harmful alcohol use during adolescence.

OP76 INVESTIGATING THE GROWING TREND OF NON-DRINKING AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE; ANALYSIS OF REPEATED CROSS-SECTIONAL SURVEYS IN ENGLAND 2005–2015

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Background Non-drinking among young people has increased over the past decade in England, yet the underlying factors driving this change is unknown. Traditionally non-drinking has been found to be associated with lower socio-economic status and poorer health. This study explores among which sub-groups non-drinking has increased, and how this correlates with changes in drinking patterns, to identify whether behaviours are becoming more polarised, or reduction is widespread among young people.

Methods Using repeated annual cross-sectional data on young people aged 16 to 24 years from the nationally representative Health Survey for England 2005–2015, trends in non-drinking including lifetime abstinence and not drinking in the past week were explored using STATA15; 1) Trends in non-drinking among social-demographic and health sub-groups were examined through a test for linear time-trends among sub-groups, adjusting for age. Additionally, an interaction between year and each variable was modelled in sex- and age-adjusted logistic regression models 2) Spearman correlation co-efficients were calculated between the proportion non-drinking by year, and heavy episodic drinking, and the mean alcohol units