



LIFETIME USE OF ALCOHOL

BY NEW JERSEY MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS

Statewide

According to the *New Jersey Middle School Risk and Protective Factor Survey*, alcohol, which includes beer, wine, and hard liquor, was the substance used most often by New Jersey adolescents in 2012. The statewide mean for lifetime use of alcohol was 23.1%, meaning that almost one-in-four students reported having tried alcohol at some point in their lives. This percentage reflects a decrease from the 27.0% rate measured in 2010 and a sharp decrease from the 34.0% figure reported in 2007**.

Countywide

In 2012, Passaic County had the highest lifetime alcohol use prevalence of 40.1%, followed by Cumberland County at 37.1%. The lowest lifetime rates were found in Morris and Monmouth counties (13.5% and 14.1%, respectively). However, because of low response rates in some counties, caution should be used when interpreting findings. Full results for lifetime alcohol use by county, sorted from high to low, can be found in Table 1 and a visual representation of county variation is available on the next page.

Table 1

County	%
<i>Passaic</i>	40.1%
<i>Cumberland</i>	37.1%
<i>Camden</i>	29.7%
<i>Hudson</i>	29.1%
<i>Gloucester</i>	25.8%
<i>Burlington</i>	23.4%
<i>Bergen</i>	23.2%
Statewide	23.1%
<i>Essex</i>	22.5%
<i>Middlesex</i>	22.4%
<i>Salem</i>	21.5%
<i>Atlantic</i>	21.3%
<i>Warren</i>	21.0%
<i>Mercer</i>	20.9%
<i>Ocean</i>	20.2%
<i>Sussex</i>	18.8%
<i>Somerset</i>	18.1%
<i>Cape May</i>	15.6%
<i>Monmouth</i>	14.1%
<i>Morris</i>	13.5%
<i>Hunterdon*</i>	n/a
<i>Union*</i>	n/a

The 2012 New Jersey Middle School Risk and Protective Factor Survey was commissioned by the Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) to assess the use of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs (ATOD), track antisocial behaviors, and document risk and protective factors among New Jersey youth. It was administered by the Bloustein Center for Survey Research (BCSR), at Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey. The survey contained 6,544 respondents statewide, with county samples ranging between 105 and 403 respondents.

*Please note that Hunterdon and Union Counties are not represented here because their sample sizes were too small to be considered reliable.

** Wording of the alcohol question was slightly different in 2007, thus making comparisons less reliable.

