

Binge drinking serious problem for US women: study

WASHINGTON, USA: Binge drinking is an under-recognised problem for US women and nearly 14m engage in it about three times a month, downing about six drinks each time, says a study released on Tuesday (8 January).

The practice is most common among women aged 18 to 34 as well as high school students, whites, Hispanics and women with household incomes of US\$75,000 or more, said the report by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

That US government institution defines binge drinking as having four or more drinks on a given occasion for women and girls.

And half of all high school girls who drink alcohol admit to binge drinking, said the new study.

Excessive drinking, including binge drinking, is responsible for about 23,000 deaths among women and girls in the United States each year.

"Binge drinking causes many health problems, and there are proven ways to prevent excessive drinking," said CDC Director Thomas Frieden.

The study emphasised that hard drinking puts women at increased risk for many diseases including breast cancer, sexually transmitted diseases and heart disease.

"Effective community measures can support women and girls in making wise choices about whether to drink or how much to drink if they do," Frieden said.

For this study, the agency examined the drinking behavior of about 278,000 US women aged 18 and older and more than 7,500 high school students over the course of 30 days in 2011.

"It is alarming to see that binge drinking is so common among women and girls, and that women and girls are drinking so much when they do," said Robert Brewer, who works on the alcohol programme at the CDC.

Source: *AFP* via I-Net Bridge