

Your binge drinking could be the fault of your partner: study

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Have a few too many egg-nogs at the holiday party this weekend? You might be able to blame it on your date (if you dare).

A [new study out of Dalhousie University](#) has found that your romantic partner can have a powerful influence on whether you binge drink.

Psychology researchers studied 208 non-married, heterosexual couples in their 20s who had been dating, on average, close to 2 years. At least one person in the relationship was an university student.

“Over a 28-day time frame, researchers were able to predict one partner’s binge drinking based the other partner’s binge drinking,” the university’s Katie McDonald wrote in a release.

A similar pattern has been observed in older married couples, but researchers say there are some key differences.

“Binge drinking in university students occurs in both young men and women. Studies with married couples show that men have more of an influence on women, but in our study, we found both young women and young men influence their partner’s binge drinking,” researcher Aislin Mushquash said in the statement.

Mr. Mushquash and his team hope their findings can be used to refine “assessment, prevention, and treatment,” of alcohol-related problems. For one, binge drinking has been linked to [an increased risk for breast cancer](#).

The public may also consider this a “cautionary piece of research,” said Dr. Simon Sherry, assistant professor in the Department of Psychology.

“Pick your friends and lovers carefully because they influence you more than you think.”

The researchers admitted their work likely raises more questions than it answers.

“Do birds of a feather all flock together? Do heavy drinkers naturally gravitate towards each other? Does each partner have a family history of alcoholism?” said Dr. Sherry.

But especially in this often-decadent holiday season with deep punch bowls and shimmering cocktails at every turn, it’s an intriguing bit of food for thought.

If your partner wasn’t reaching for that extra glass, would you?

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