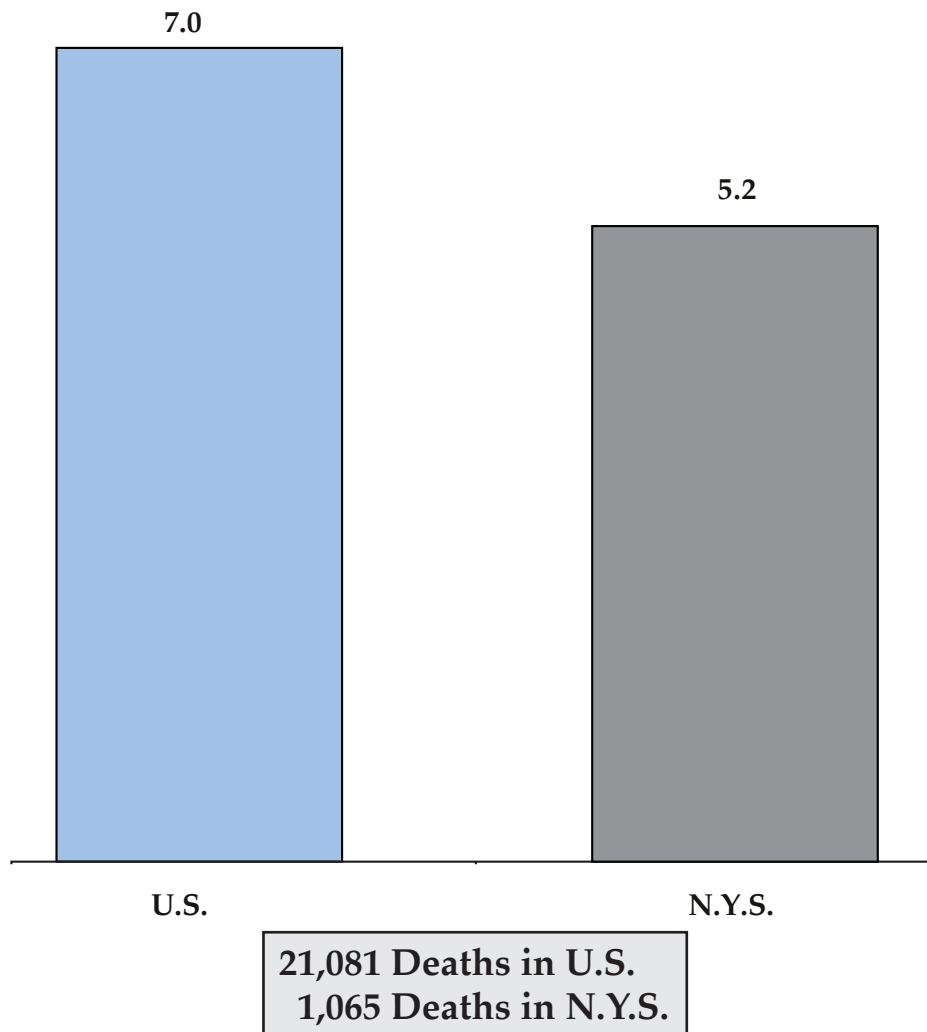




The Facts About... **Alcohol Abuse**

Death Rates from Alcohol Abuse, 2004 Alcohol Death Rate per 100,000 population



Source: CQ Press, State Fact Finder Series - Health Care State Rankings 2008

Alcohol is implicated in the deaths of approximately 85,000 Americans every year; making it the nation's third leading cause of preventable death after smoking and obesity.

In New York State, 1,065 alcohol-induced deaths occurred in 2004, down from 1,102 alcohol-induced deaths in 2003, according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the National Center for Health Statistics. This includes excessive blood alcohol levels, accidental poisoning, and several alcohol-related causes but excludes indirect causes such as accidents and homicides.



The Facts About... Alcohol Abuse

What is Alcoholism?

Alcoholism is a chronic disease, progressive and often fatal. It is a primary disorder and not a symptom of other diseases or emotional problems, according to WebMD Health. Alcoholism occurs when the brain becomes dependent on the effects of alcohol. The severity of the disease is influenced by genetics, psychology, culture, and response to physical pain.

How is Alcohol Use and Abuse Defined

Experts define levels of alcohol use and abuse as follows (with a drink defined as 12 oz. of beer, 6 oz. of wine, or 1.5 oz. of 90-proof liquor):

- Moderate drinking: equal to or less than two drinks a day for men and equal to or less than one drink a day for women.
- At-risk drinking: more than 14 drinks per week or 4 drinks at one sitting for men and more than 7 drinks a week or 3 drinks in one sitting for women.
- Binge Drinking: Heavy consumption – five or more drinks in a row by men or four or more drinks in a row by women – over a short period of time at least once in the previous 2 weeks. Heavy binge drinking includes three or more such episodes in 2 weeks.
- Alcohol abuse: one or more of the following alcohol-related problems over a period of one year - failure to fulfill work or personal obligations; recurrent use in potentially dangerous situations; problems with the law; and continued use in spite of harm being done to social or personal relationships.
- Alcohol dependence: The individual experiences three or more of the following alcohol-related problems over a period of one year - increased amounts of alcohol needed to produce an effect; withdrawal symptoms; drinking more over a given period than intended; unsuccessful attempts to quit or cut down; giving up significant leisure or work activities; continuing drinking in spite of the knowledge of its physical or psychological harm to oneself or others.



The Facts About... Alcohol Abuse

Cost and Effects of Underage Alcohol Abuse

According to the International Institute for alcohol awareness, underage drinking is a serious national problem that costs the United States \$62.6 billion annually in deaths, injuries, property damage and related economic and productivity losses.

In 2005 alone, underage drinking cost New Yorkers \$3.2 billion. This translates to a cost of \$1,803 per year for each New York State youth.

Effects from alcohol abuse include:

- Unintentional injury, especially in motor vehicle crashes
- Morbidity, disability and untimely mortality
- Harm to the fetus during pregnancy
- Unsafe sexual practices
- Domestic violence, sexual assault and suicide
- Commission of crimes, including homicide

Cost per youth of underage drinking in the 5 largest states, 2005	
California	\$7.3 Billion
Texas	\$5.2 Billion
New York	\$3.2 Billion
Florida	\$3.7 Billion
Illinois	\$2.9 Billion

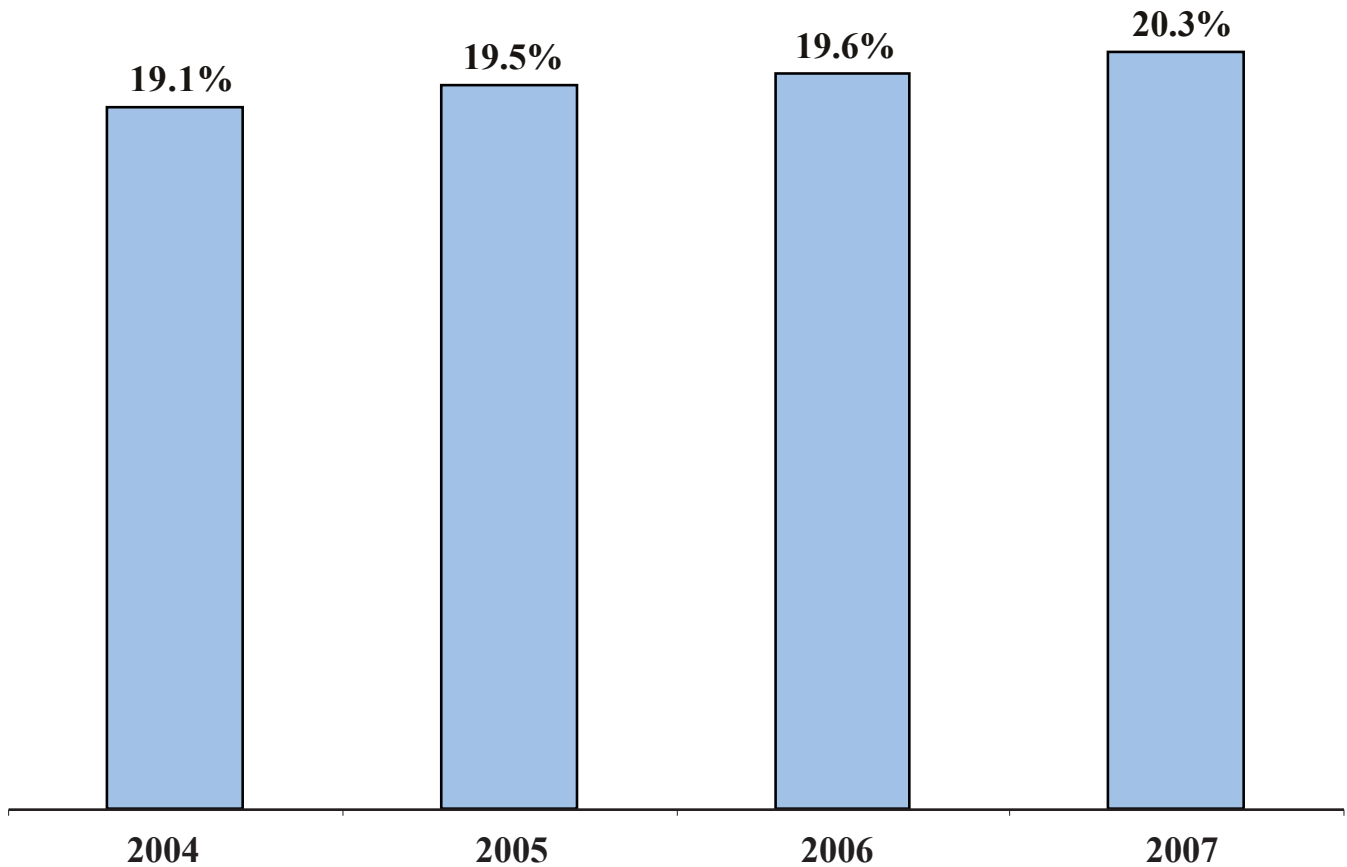
Cost per youth of underage drinking in neighboring states, 2005	
New York	\$3.2 Billion
Ohio	\$2.7 Billion
Pennsylvania	\$2.0 Billion
New Jersey	\$1.5 Billion
Massachusetts	\$1.4 Billion
Connecticut	\$621 Million

Costs Associated with Underage Drinking in New York, 2005	
Effects of Alcohol Abuse in Youth	Cost (in Millions)
Violence	\$1,722.7
Traffic Crashes	\$617.1
High-Risk Sex, Ages 14-20	\$302.7
Youth Alcohol Treatment	\$262.0
Crime	\$135.5
Injury	\$114.2
Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (Among Mothers Age 15-20)	\$55.2
Poisonings and Psychoses	\$37.4
Total	\$3,245.9



The Facts About... **Alcohol Abuse**

Percentage of Adults Aged 18 Years and Over With Heavy or At-Risk Alcohol Consumption in the United States, 2004-2007



Source: National Center for Health Statistics, National Health Interview Survey, Jan.-Sept. 2007

The National Center for Health Statistics defines heavy or at-risk alcohol consumption as having greater than or equal to 5 drinks in one day at least once during the past twelve months.

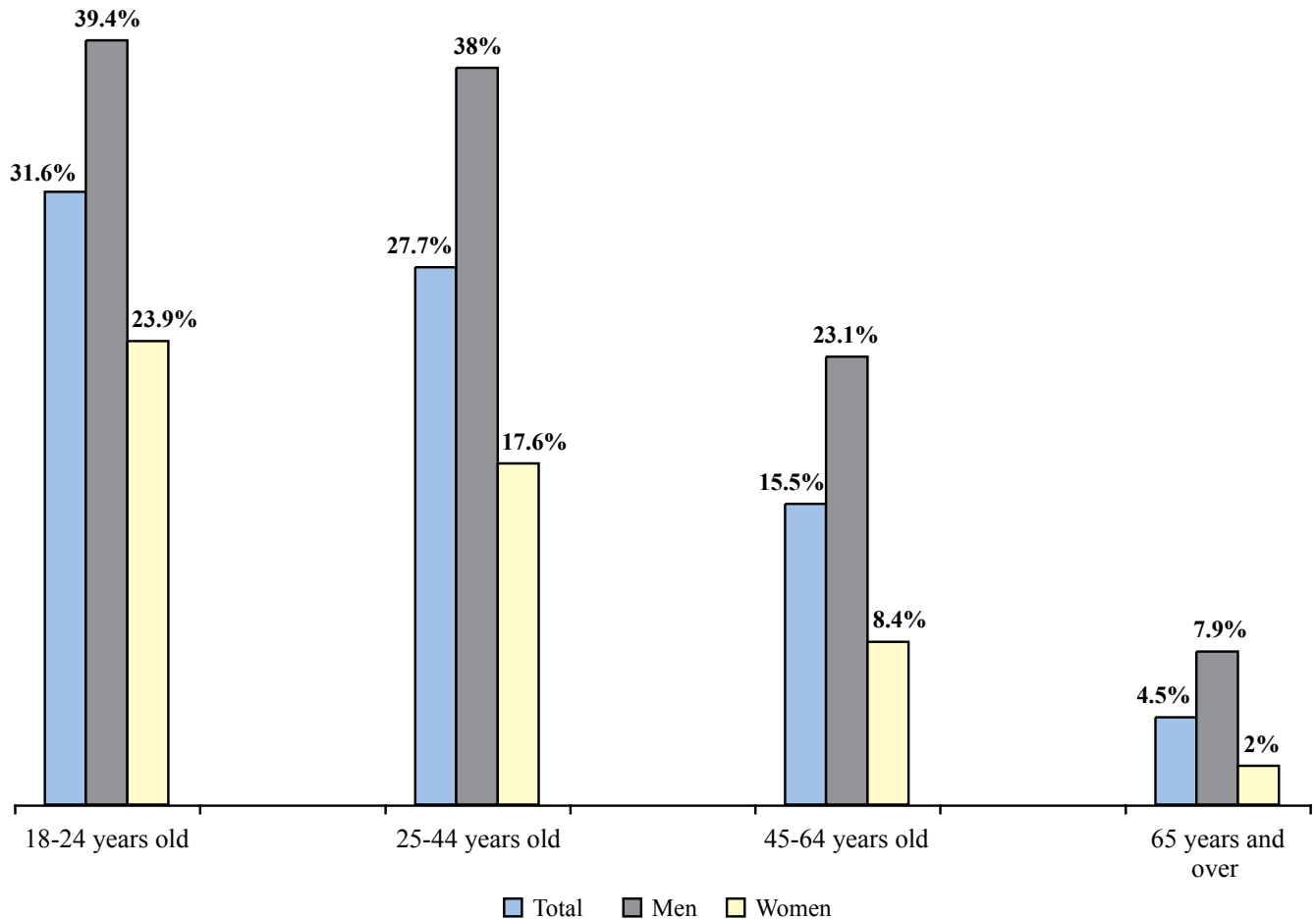
According to the chart above – for both men and women – younger adults were more likely than older adults to have engaged in heavy or at-risk alcohol consumption.

In all four age groups, men were considerably more likely than women to have engaged in heavy alcohol consumption.



The Facts About... **Alcohol Abuse**

Percentage of Adults Aged 18 Years and Over With Heavy or At-Risk Alcohol Consumption in the United States, by Age and Sex, January through September 2007



Source: National Center for Health Statistics, National Health Interview Survey, Jan.-Sept., 2007

Some Useful Sites for Information on Alcohol Abuse

- [New York State Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services](#)
- [National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism](#)
- [The National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information](#)