"In the News"

**Moderate Drinking Doesn’t Sharpen Thinking Skills.** According to a new report from researchers from University College London, having a drink or two a day may not help maintain a sharp mind as people age. “In people who were not problem drinkers, higher alcohol intake was not associated with improved current cognition after controlling for premorbid intelligence and physical health,” the study concluded. The findings suggest that, despite previous suggestions, moderate alcohol consumption does not protect older people from cognitive decline. November 2009.

**FDA Threatens Ban on Alcoholic Energy Drinks.** Alcoholic drinks that contain caffeine are facing an imminent ban by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration unless manufacturers can clearly show that the products are safe for consumers. Emerging research results suggest that younger consumers of these products are more likely to become either the perpetrator or victim of sexual aggression, to ride with an intoxicated driver or to become otherwise injured. November 2009.

**Rate of Alcohol-Related Road Deaths Declines in Eight States But Rises in Six.** Almost 1,300 fewer Americans died in alcohol-related crashes last year than in 2007, and in eight states the fatality rates dropped by 20 percent or more according to the U.S. Department of Transportation. However, in Kansas, Oklahoma, Colorado and three other states the rate of alcohol-related fatalities rose! December 2009

**One Drink a Day for Women Raises the Risk of Cancers.** New research from the University of Oxford, which analyzed data from more than 1.2 million middle-aged British women, found that drinking one drink per day was linked to 13 percent of breast, liver, rectum, and upper respiratory/digestive tract cancers for women. The type of alcohol consumed did not seem to matter. Overall, each additional drink increased the cancer risks. For women who drank and smoked, the risk of developing mouth and throat cancers increased. February 2009.

**College Men Unimpressed by Female Binge Drinkers.** Some college women may drink excessively to attract the attention of men. New research from Loyola Marymount University suggests that drunk women are not as attractive to men as some women believe. The majority (71 percent) of women surveyed overestimated the number of alcoholic beverages they think men want their female friends, dates, or girlfriends to drink. March 2009.

Funding in part provided by the City of Manhattan
Horrific Van Crash Highlights Disturbing Trend in Female DUIs. More women in the U. S. are drinking and driving. The Associated Press reported that while most drunk drivers are men, the number of DUI arrests of women rose 28.8 percent between 1998 and 2007, while among men, such arrests declined 7.5 percent. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration reports that there are of parts of the country where women are now the majority of impaired drivers involved in fatal crashes. August 2009.

Drunk Drivers with Kids in Car Could Face Felonies in New York. The New York State Assembly has passed a bill that makes it a felony offense to drive while intoxicated if children under age 16 are in the vehicle. Currently, only Arizona makes it a felony offense to drive drunk with children. The bill also requires first-time convicted drunk drivers to install ignition-interlock devices on their cars to prevent repeat offenses. New York Governor David Patterson supports the bill. November 2009.

Alcoholics Have a Hard Time Processing Emotions. Brain damage caused by excessive drinking can impair an alcoholic’s ability to read facial expressions and also blunts his or her emotions. The study, conducted at the University of California at San Diego, indicated that this problem could result in miscommunication during emotionally charged situations and could lead to unnecessary conflicts and difficulties in interpersonal relationships. The resulting negative repercussions can, in turn, contribute to increased drinking. August 2009.

Truck Crashes Have Decreased Significantly After Alcohol Testing Required. There have been 23 percent fewer alcohol-related truck crashes per mile in the U.S. since the requirement became effective that commercial truck drivers submit to alcohol testing. The U.S. law calls for suspending the license of any commercial trucker found to have a blood-alcohol level of 0.04 percent or higher. October 2009.

Painkiller Misuse Up Among Young Adults. A study from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration says that prescription painkiller misuse among young adults has increased even as non-medical use by teenagers decreased between 2002 and 2007. Overall, about 5.2 million people ages 12 years and older said that within the past month they had used prescription pain relievers non-medically. February 2009.

10 Percent of Americans Use Antidepressants. New research finds that 27 million Americans took antidepressant medications in 2005, double the number who reported taking such drugs in 1996. Researchers at Columbia University and the University of Pennsylvania also found that fewer patients were seeking psychotherapy for depression, even though research has shown that therapy can be at least as effective as medication in treating depression. August 2009.

Roadside Driver Checks Reveal Less Drinking, but More Evidence of Drug Use. Random tests of U.S. drivers revealed that fewer Americans are driving drunk, but more have traces of illicit drugs in their bodies. In its study of blood, breath and saliva tests collected on weekends from drivers in 300 locations nationally, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) found that just 2.2 percent of drivers had blood-alcohol levels in excess of the legal limit of 0.08 percent. Most impairment was detected between the hours of 1 a.m. and 3 a.m. Motorcyclists and pick-up truck drivers were more likely to be intoxicated than drivers of other vehicles. NHTSA also found that nine percent of drivers had detectable traces of marijuana, and four percent had cocaine or prescription drugs in their system. July 2009.
Kansas Alcohol/Drug Costs. In 2005 in Kansas, underage drinking costs were estimated at $646 million dollars. Kansas spends a little over 17 percent of its state budget on substance abuse prevention and addiction. Fall 2009.

College Students More Likely to Misuse the Drug Adderall. According to data from the National Survey on Drug Use and Health, college students between the ages of 18 and 22 were twice as likely to use the amphetamine drug Adderall non-medically as those who had not been in college at all or were part-time students. Approximately 90 percent of the full-time college students who had used Adderall non-medically in the past year also engaged in binge drinking in the past month. These students were three times more likely to use marijuana, eight times more likely to use cocaine, and five times more likely to use pain relievers for non-medical purposes. April 2009.

Average THC in Marijuana Tops 10 Percent. An annual government study of marijuana potency found that the average THC content in street samples topped 10 percent for the first time last year; in 1983, marijuana averaged four percent THC. A researcher at the University of Mississippi predicted that the average THC level of marijuana would continue to rise for several more years before leveling off at 15-16 percent. May 2009.

Link Found Between Marijuana Use and Testicular Cancer. Researchers say that young men who smoke marijuana weekly, or who have smoked beginning in their teen years, face twice the risk of an aggressive form of testicular cancer called nonseminoma. Current marijuana users had an overall 70-percent increased risk of testicular cancer compared to nonusers. The testicles are one of the few organs in the body that have receptor sites for cannabinoids, the active ingredient in marijuana. February 2009.

Male Sexual Problems Caused by Marijuana Use. Research from the University of Melbourne found that men who smoke marijuana may have more problems achieving orgasm during sex than abstainers. Previous studies have also found a relationship between marijuana use and male sexual dysfunction. The Australian research also found that men and women who smoked marijuana daily were more likely to have had multiple sex partners than nonusers. September 2009.

Army No Longer Considering Recruits Who Fail Drug Tests. A few years ago the U.S. Army relaxed its rules to admit some recruits who failed drug tests to join the service. Now that the economy has worsened and the situation in Iraq is quieter, recruiting is picking up and the Army is eliminating the waiver. Likewise, the Army has discontinued the practice of allowing some recruits with felony records to apply for waivers. The Army will no longer accept recruits with Juvenile arrest records unless they have completed their high school diplomas. April 2009.

Family Dinners Still Popular in U.S. Homes. More than 60 percent of families in the U.S. said they ate family dinners together at least five nights during the past week. Research at Columbia University’s National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse has found that there are many benefits to frequent family dinners, including that the more often kids eat dinner with their families, the less likely they are to smoke, drink or use drugs. November 2009.

Male Athletes Drink More, Smoke Less. Adolescent males who play team sports are less likely to smoke cigarettes or be depressed but are more likely to drink alcohol and get into fights. The study of 13,000 U.S. high school students also found that male athletes had binge-drinking rates 40 percent higher than nonathletes. November 2009.
Athletes Who Use Performance Drugs Likely to Abuse Other Substances. Rutgers University researchers have found that student athletes who use legal drugs and illicit drugs to boost their sports performance also are more likely to drink heavily and use recreational drugs like marijuana and cocaine. The study also found that the drug-using athletes were more likely to suffer consequences such as missing class, getting into fights, and earning poor grades. November 2009.

Flu and Smoking. Studies by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention of smokers versus non-smokers show a higher mortality rate from influenza for smokers. People exposed to secondhand smoke are at greater risk from flu complications, the study determined. November 2009.

Unemployed Americans Smoke the Most. More than 45 percent of unemployed Americans ages 18 to 64 smoke cigarettes compared to 28 percent of those employed, according to findings from a survey of 74,000 people by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. October 2009.

Cigarette Companies Use Color to Convey ‘Mild’ Message. Federal law will soon bar cigarette companies from using terms like ‘mild’ and ‘light’ to describe their products, but marketers are using pastels and other soft color schemes on the cigarette packaging to convey the mild/light impression. Pall Mall Lights, for example, are now called Pall Mall Blues and are offered in a royal-blue package. Research in countries similar to the U.S. finds that smokers believe that cigarettes sold under names like “silver,” “gold” and “smooth” are safer than other labels and less addictive. October 2009.