

Too Much Time in the Pub?

by Elizabeth Fletcher

We've all heard it a million times before - binge drinking is bad for you! We are all aware of the consequences that it can have on our health in the long term and whether we choose to listen is up to us...

However, what about the alcohol consumption that isn't done on a student night? What about that sly swift one down the pub before Tutor Group? Or maybe during your free on a Wednesday afternoon? Or even when you finish early on a Friday?

For the purpose of this article, we will put aside the legal drinking age (that is 18 years old for those of you not already counting down the days!) and I think I'm right in saying that it is no big secret that many an enjoyable hour can be spent in the college local, drinking or not drinking. It's sociable, relaxing and good to get away from the pressures of college for a bit. We don't think anything of the odd drink here and there, especially if someone else is buying!

But is it just harmless fun? Or are there any negative effects on our learning or even on our health?

It doesn't take a genius to work out that if you go into your next lesson a bit merry, you aren't going to have the most productive 90 minutes of your life (even if it is Tutor Group!). Alcohol slows down your reactions and affects your concentration. So yes, time may seem to go quicker and your teacher may seem unusually hilarious (admittedly, this is pretty entertaining!) but if it became a regular thing, you might have to ask yourself why you bother turning up at all.

With students studying 4 subjects at Oldham sixth form having around 5 free lessons a week and those studying less subjects having even more, it was never going to be realistic for us to be expected to spend all of our free time in the JU or the LRC. After all, too much studying hurts our brains! We want to relax a bit, unwind and make the most of student life. We've walked into town a million times before, the common room is too full and just one drink doesn't hurt, does it? But it happens to the best of us - one quick drink becomes two and before you know it, your 90 free minutes have become a lot more fun...

It is also worth bearing in mind that male adults (again, for the purpose of this article we will turn a blind eye to the sneaky underage drinkers out there!) should not exceed 3-4 units of alcohol per day and females should not consume more than 2-3 units. For example, beer counts as 2 units per pint (you can get more information on alcohol units at <http://www.drinkaware.co.uk/how-many-units.html>), Not to mention the fact that it can be a pretty costly way to spend your free time!

So rather than abandoning the pub altogether (we don't want to be totally unrealistic here) and once again putting the legal age limit aside (I can't promote under-age drinking!), it is worth maybe questioning if your time in the pub is justified

ie. the college work gets done one way or another and you know how much alcohol you can take before you becoming a bit useless.

And really, if all else fails, who says you can't read your notes over a quick drink?