

**A Weekly FAX from the Center for Substance Abuse Research**

**University of Maryland, College Park**

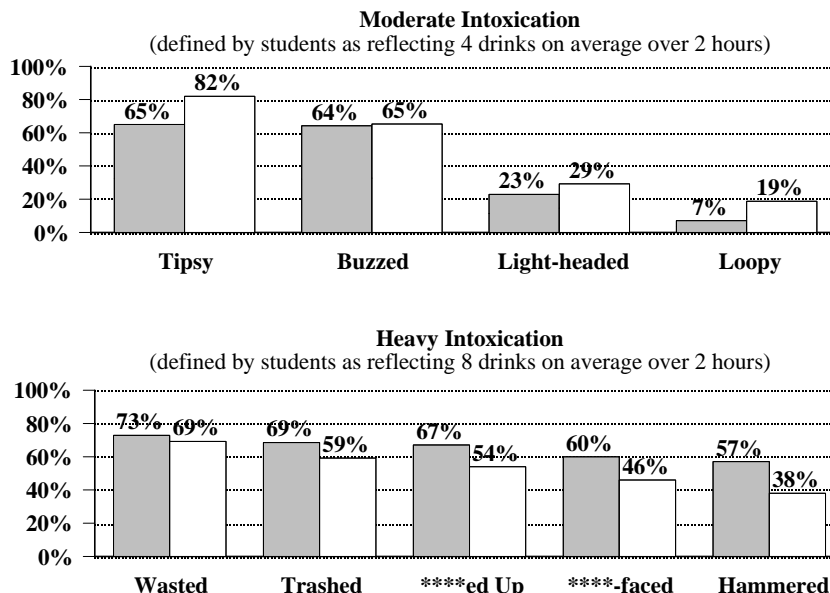
***Study Suggests Replacing “Drunk” and “High” With More Generational-Appropriate Terms for Alcohol Intoxication in College Student Self-Report Research***

While there are many terms for intoxication, alcohol researchers often rely on the terms “drunk” or “high” to assess the self-reported subjective effects of heavy alcohol use. These terms, however, may not adequately represent the actual terms used by college students to describe perceived levels of intoxication. A recent online survey at a large Midwestern university found that the majority of students were not familiar with the term “high” in relation to alcohol intoxication and the term “drunk” was associated with a generalized level of intoxication that could not be easily categorized as moderate or heavy intoxication, as could the other terms used by college students. Instead, students used multiple other terms to describe moderate and heavy levels of alcohol intoxication, and these terms varied slightly according to gender (see figure below). The authors suggest that self-report surveys may be more effective if they include multiple intoxication-related terms that are 1) often used by drinkers as self-descriptors and 2) represent both moderate (e.g., buzzed, tipsy, light-headed) and heavy intoxication (e.g., trashed, wasted, hammered). They also suggest that researchers “periodically assess current intoxicated-related vocabulary considering demographic, generational, and socio-cultural differences” (p. 448).

**Percentage of College Students Reporting Use of Terms to Describe Themselves While Intoxicated**

(N=290 undergraduate students at a large Midwestern University)

■ Men □ Women



SOURCE: Adapted by CESAR from Levit, A., Sher, K.J., and Bartholow, B.D. “The Language of Intoxication: Preliminary Investigations,” *Alcohol Clinical and Experimental Research* 33(3):448-454, 2009. For more information, contact Ash Levit at adlgd5@mizzou.edu.

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