**U.S. Alcohol-Related Deaths Have Doubled, Study Says**

**VANESSA ROMO**  **ALLISON AUBREY**

**Overall, researchers found men died of alcohol-related causes in 2017 at a higher rate than women. But when analyzing annual increases in deaths, the largest increase was among white women.**

More Americans are ordering more rounds and that's leading to more funerals, according to a new study on alcohol-related deaths. Looking at data from the National Center for Health Statistics researchers estimate deaths from alcohol-related problems have more than doubled over the last 20 years.

Death certificates spanning 2017 indicate nearly 73,000 people died in the U.S due to liver disease and other alcohol-related illnesses. That is up from just under 36,000 deaths in 1999.
Some of the greatest increases were found among women and people who were middle-aged and older.

The study comes from the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, which is part of NIH. It was published on Wednesday in the journal Alcoholism: Clinical and Experimental Research.

RESEARCH NEWS
A Single Dose Of Ketamine Might Help Heavy Drinkers, Study Finds

Overall, researchers found men died at a higher rate than women. But when analyzing annual increases in deaths, the largest increase was among white women.

"With the increases in alcohol use among women, there's been increases in harms for women including ER visits, hospitalization and deaths," Aaron White, who authored the paper, told NPR.

The research shows that in 2017, alcohol proved to be even more deadly than illicit drugs, including opioids. That year there were about 70,000 drug overdose deaths — about 2,300 fewer than those involving alcohol, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Alcohol: Have You Ever Thought About Cutting Back?
Only cigarettes are deadlier than alcohol; more than 480,000 people die each year in the U.S. because of smoking-related illnesses. However, alcohol-related overdoses — either alone or with drugs — rose between 1999 and 2017. Other alcohol-related causes included heart disease, cancer and accidental injuries like falls.

The number of deaths caused by drunken driving over the same two decades declined.

Other findings included in the study:

- "70.1% of the population aged 18 and older ... consumed alcohol in 2017, averaging approximately 3.6 gallons of pure alcohol per drinker."

- "While the overall prevalence of drinking and binge drinking did not change for men, there was a 10.1% increase in the prevalence of drinking and a 23.3% increase in binge drinking among women."

- "Increases in consumption were larger for people aged 50 and older relative to younger age-groups."