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Survey: Binge-drinking rampant in county

*By Gina Tenorio
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Binge-drinking has become a growing problem.

So say the numbers put together by the Palm Desert-based Health Assessment Resource Center.

According to a recently released study, more than one in five residents of eastern Riverside County — from Calimesa to Blythe — admitted to binge-drinking at least once within the last 30 days.

The institute defined binge-drinking for men as the consumption of five or more drinks in a row. For women, the definition is consuming four or more drinks in a row.

The numbers were tallied from more than 3,500 completed household surveys.

This is the first time such a survey has been done in any area of Riverside County, agency officials said.

According to the statistics, 10 percent of those surveyed — representing some 29,000 residents — admitted to binge-drinking once over the period of a month.

The percentage of those who admitted to binge-drinking more than once in the same time frame was 13.4 percent, representing roughly 40,000 people, according to the statistics.

Despite the large area which is included in the survey, a bulk of those surveyed were from the Coachella Valley, said Glen Grayman, MD, Director of HARC.

Of those, 2.5 percent, or about 7,673 residents, admitted driving under the influence in the last 30 days.

“Those were the people who admitted it,” said Eileen Parker, executive director for HARC. “That means the number is higher.”