Al-Anon: Friends of alcoholics avg. three more problem drinkers in their lives

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Family and friends who report knowing an alcoholic, usually have three or four more among their acquaintances

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Survey results reported January 31 by the support group **AI-Anon** show a new dynamic in the relationship between **alcohol abusers**, those with the disease of alcoholism and the people around them. Only 20 percent of those surveyed for the 2012 AI-Anon Family Groups Survey who said they have had a problem drinker in their lives reported just a lone relationship with an alcoholic. The report shows 60 percent had two-to-four alcoholics in their lives, including one or both parents, a spouse or romantic partner, children, grandparents, siblings or friends. Twenty percent have had five-to-11 alcoholic relationships.

The survey has been conducted every three years since 1984. It provides data on the demographic characteristics of Al-Anon's membership – the families and friends of alcoholics – and the health benefits members may come to realize in learning to cope with the negative effects of someone else's problem drinking.

Pamela Walters, Al-Anon Family Groups Information Analyst, says, "These numbers validate that alcoholism is a family illness, as many Al-Anon members have come to understand. Alcoholism is more than just the drinker's addiction to alcohol. It has complex emotional and social effects on family members and anyone else who has a close relationship with an alcoholic.

"In Al-Anon, the friends and families of alcoholics find their way to recovery from the effects of alcoholism as a family illness, just as alcoholics work toward their own recovery from the addictive effects of alcohol, in Alcoholics Anonymous (AA)," Ms. Walters said. "Even people who do not think their lives have been affected by a problem drinker are surprised at what they learn in Al-Anon meetings."

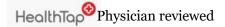
From September to October of 2012, the Al-Anon Family Groups World Service Office conducted the Membership Survey of its members located in the U.S., Bermuda, Puerto Rico and Canada. More than 3,200 Al-Anon members participated.

Al-Anon Family Groups are for families and friends who have been affected by a loved one's drinking. Nearly 16,000 local groups meet throughout the U.S., Canada, Bermuda, and Puerto Rico every week.

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