Depression in women can be fueled by hostile husbands, a new study suggests. But the reverse seems not to be true.

Additionally, warm, positive behavior from husbands lessened the negative impact of their hostile behavior.

In the study, researchers watched 20-minute clips of 416 married couples interacting at home. The videos were coded for two behavior types: anti-social behaviors, which are those that are self-centered, defiant or show a lack of constraint; and hostile behaviors that are angry, critical or rejecting. Participants in the study also reported any symptoms of depression.

For instance, being snippy or curt with a spouse, interrupting her, eye-rolling, sneers and yelling were considered hostile behaviors.

"In the study, husbands' marital hostility was significantly related to increases in wives' symptoms of depression," said study researcher Christine Proulx of the University of Missouri. "The more hostile and anti-social behavior exhibited by husbands, the more depressed their wives were after three years. These findings suggest that husbands' treatment of their wives significantly impacts their psychological well-being and that hostile behavior has a lasting effect on couples that continues throughout their marriages."

On the flip side, the researchers didn't find any link between wives' angry behaviors and their husbands' depression — unless there was a significant life event at the time, including a death in the family or a job loss.

"It is possible that women's well-being is more closely tied to the well-being of their close relationships than is the case for men," Proulx told LiveScience. "So they may be more vulnerable than husbands are when there is hostility in the marriage."

But a greater number of recent, stressful events might put husbands at risk for being negatively impacted by their wives' hostility, according to Proulx.

In the United States, nearly 10 percent of the population suffers from a depressive disorder, according to the National Institute of Mental Health. While the causes of depression vary, a husband's angry behavior could be a contributing factor.

"It's critical that professionals ask people experiencing depression about their close relationships and recognize that their spouse's behavior influences how they feel about life and themselves, especially among women," Proulx said. "It is important to intervene at the couple level and make spouses aware that how they act toward each other has a long-term effect on their emotional and physical well-being."

The study was published in a recent issue of the Journal of Family Psychology.
University of Missouri junior Courtney Schmiemeier with her 21st birthday shot book in the lounge of the Kappa Kappa Gamma sorority Tuesday, Feb. 9, 2010, in Columbia, Mo. Schmiemeier's friends and family created the scrapbook filled with memories of their lives.

From a baby's first steps to high school graduation, scrapbooks provide friends and loved ones a way to preserve cherished memories. In some college towns in the Midwest, scrapbooks are also used to chronicle a far more ominous rite of passage: bar-hopping drinking binges, one alcohol shot at a time.

They're called "shot books" and often used to commemorate 21st birthdays, with one shot for every year represented.

"It's a real tradition here," said Ken Sher, a Missouri psychological sciences professor who studies alcohol abuse among college students.

Shot books are made by and for women almost exclusively, especially in sororities, according to Sher and other experts. The keepsakes come bedecked with photos, drink names, bar locales and progressively sloppier signatures _ visual reminders of a night of excess few could recall on their own.

Those who study the phenomenon say it's primarily a Midwestern ritual, though it has popped up elsewhere. There are online "how-to" guides offering step-by-step instructions, and YouTube videos chronicling such events.

Giselle Paris, 22, a sorority member at Missouri State University in Springfield, called 21st birthday scrapbooks an ingrained part of Greek life on campus at her southwest Missouri school.

"I see it almost every weekend here," she said.

Paris, a senior from Kansas City, described an all-day event on her birthday that began with a "wake-up shot" at 9 a.m. and included regular meals, snacks and even a pre-dinner nap before the binge concluded 15 hours later.

"I'm sure it sounds dangerous," she said. "It's evidence that we condone binge drinking."
In Columbia at the University of Missouri, junior Courtney Schmiemeier of St. Louis said her shot book is more about cherished memories than drunken misbehavior. The English major even invited her mother along for the party and Mom accepted.

"I'm going to be proud of it forever," she said. It's not so much the drinking. I have pages showing all of my good friends."

Alcohol counselors say the shot books not only encourage risky behavior but also expose bar owners and employees who are sometimes included in the photos to legal consequences should the birthday drinker get sick from alcohol poisoning or even die.

"They're putting themselves in such a vulnerable position, liability-wise," said Kim Dude, assistant director of the Wellness Resource Center at Missouri.

"If this person ends up dying of alcohol poisoning, that picture is being taken at your bar. ... Now you have written proof of your role in the ceremony."

According to the National Institutes of Health, alcohol-related deaths among U.S. college students rose from 1,440 deaths in 1998 to 1,825 in 2005 - a 27 percent increase. The numbers include traffic-related deaths.

For 21st birthday party drinkers, successfully finishing 21 shots is less important than making the effort, said Clayton Neighbors, a University of Houston psychology professor. His research shows that fewer than 10 percent of those who attempt to reach that threshold actually do.

"Most of them don't make it," he said. "If you get 21 shots down without throwing up, you're going to be in the hospital, or dead."

Video diaries of 21 shots are as accessible as the nearest YouTube link, Neighbors pointed out. Creating permanent reminders of the birthday ritual can only heighten the risk, he said.

"They have a blank scrapbook and think they have to fill it up," he said. "Anytime other people are making a big deal about the celebrant having 21 shots, it creates a lot of pressure."

Paris said the drinking game is about participation, not pressure. Failing to reach 21 shots is no cause for scorn - but for some, she said, that level of excess is merely a starting point.

"I have friends who don't make it to 21, and I have some who've made it to 50," she said.
Panel to look at role of Access Missouri

Tuesday, February 23, 2010

Eight university representatives have been invited to participate, including University of Missouri System President Gary Forsee, Westminster College President Barney Forsythe and Central Methodist University President Marianne Inman. Commissioner Robert Stein will facilitate the discussions and expects the first meeting to be held in the coming weeks.

Access Missouri awards needs-based scholarships to Missouri students.

The maximum amount for a student who goes to a public four-year institution is $2,150, and the maximum for a student attending a private school is $4,600.

Supporters argue the amounts are fair because they represent a percentage of tuition and private schools are more expensive. Critics, including Forsee, say Missouri taxpayers should not spend more on students who opt for a private education.

Sen. Kurt Schaefer, R-Columbia, has sponsored legislation that would equalize the amounts to $2,850.
LETTER: Energy panel at MU discusses alternatives to coal

By Melissa Vatterott, Columbia
February 23, 2010 | 5:43 p.m. CST

After attending Coal-Free Mizzou’s Clean Energy Panel on Feb. 10, it was great to hear environmental and energy experts discuss what the future may hold for MU’s energy use.

The panel laid out the importance of achieving this goal and what tools can be implemented. However, the term “thinning” of forests was discussed and I do not feel such practices would lead MU toward sustainability. Although biomass will be a significant contribution to reducing our coal usage, I hope that MU will invest in biomass from areas meant for such means.

In addition, confirmation from Steve Burdic that the university plans to eliminate coal usage completely, clarified for some audience members that planting trees will not be used to offset carbon emissions to reach carbon neutrality.

With the signing of the American College and University Presidents’ Climate Commitment, MU must determine how to achieve carbon neutrality and confirm a date when the goal will be completed.

This is another exciting step in the right direction for MU and I hope that administration understands that we cannot wait 100 or even 50 years to be coal-free. With tools such as a power purchase agreement, MU could move faster than originally thought.
BOSTON -- A month after being crowned the darling of national conservatives, Republican Sen. Scott Brown of Massachusetts is being branded "Benedict Brown" for siding with Democrats in favor of a jobs bill endorsed by the Obama administration.

Like the four other GOP senators who joined him, the man who won the late Democrat Edward Kennedy's seat says it's about jobs, not party politics. And that may be good politics, too.

The four other GOP senators who broke ranks - Olympia Snowe and Susan Collins of Maine, George Voinovich of Ohio and Christopher "Kit" Bond of Missouri - also were criticized on Tuesday. But Brown was the big target on conservative Web sites, talk shows and even the Facebook page his campaign has promoted as an example of his new-media savvy.

"We campaigned for you. We donated to your campaign. And you turned on us like every other RINO," said one writer, using the initials for "Republican-In-Name-Only."

The conservative-tilting Drudge Report colored a photo of Brown on its home page in scarlet.

The new senator responded by calling into a Boston radio station.

"I've taken three votes." Brown said with exasperation. "And to say I've sold out any particular party or interest group, I think, is certainly unfair."

The senator said that by the time he seeks re-election in two years, he will have taken thousands of votes.

"So, I think it's a little premature to say that," he said.
Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell of Kentucky wasn't particularly perturbed about Brown's vote, saying his election last month has "made a huge, positive difference for us and for the whole legislative agenda."

"We don't expect our members to be in lockstep on every single issue," McConnell added.

Political observers said each of the five Republican senators had solid reasons locally for voting as they did, to cut off a potential Republican filibuster on the bill.

The measure featured four provisions that enjoyed sweeping bipartisan support, including a measure exempting businesses hiring the unemployed from Social Security payroll taxes through December, and giving them a $1,000 credit if new workers stay on the job a full year. It would also renew highway programs through December and deposit $20 billion in the highway trust fund.

It faces a final Senate vote Wednesday.

Snowe and Collins hail from economically ailing Maine, and they can't stray too far from the Democrats who populate much of New England. And Voinovich and Bond also are from states hard hit by the recession.

The latter two also have the ultimate protection from retribution: They're not seeking re-election this fall.

"When you have decided to retire and you are a free agent, you can pretty much do what you want," said Peverill Squire, a political scientist at the University of Missouri-Columbia. And Squire doubted that Bond, retiring after 24 years in the Senate, would have paid much of a political price even if the famous appropriator were seeking re-election.

"He's had no shyness in trying to send money," he said.

While conservative columnist Michelle Malkin used her blog to accuse Voinovich of being a traitor, even suggesting he got some unspecified goody for his vote in favor of the "porkulus" bill, Ohio's governor defended him.

Gov. Ted Strickland, a Democrat, praised the senator for "standing with the people of Ohio over the majority of his party."

For Voinovich, a Republican from a Democratic stronghold, the party defection was nothing new. The two-time Ohio governor and former Cleveland mayor has sprinkled his political career with independent votes that can agitate the GOP. Former President George W. Bush famously visited Ohio in 2003 in an attempt to secure Voinovich's support for a tax cut package.

Voinovich still voted no.
Snowe and Collins, meanwhile, "survive in New England by a unique set of rules," said Dante Scala, political science professor at the University of New Hampshire.

He said: "The way they survive with voters in their homes states is by making it clear that, first and foremost, they're the servants of their constituencies, not the party label. So, they'll make a point of defying their party and going their own way."

Brown got little such leeway, despite campaigning as an "independent Republican" and publicly eschewing national supporters.

National Republican groups, as well as "tea party" members and an array of conservative special interests, all claimed a share of the credit for his upset win in the battle to succeed the legendary Kennedy.

They felt especially justified after funneling millions to Brown's campaign, including $348,000 on late television ads paid by the California-based Tea Party Express.

"You've already turned out to be as big an idiot as Obama," said one Facebook poster. "Enjoy your one term as senator."

One local political scientist believes the vote was anything but dumb, considering Brown faces re-election in less than three years.

"Scott Brown knows that he's going to be judged differently in 2012 than he was in 2010," said Jeffrey Berry, a political science professor at the senator's alma mater, Tufts University. "He's facing a different electorate, with more Democratic voters, and Barack Obama at the top of the ticket, in what is still a blue state."

Associated Press writers Julie Carr Smyth in Ohio; David Sharp in Portland, Maine; David Lieb and Chris Blank in Jefferson City, Mo., and; Steve LeBlanc in Boston contributed to this report.

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Petition-seekers oppose stricter requirements

Jefferson City -- Legislative efforts to rein in the number of citizen-initiated ballot questions is running into opposition from citizens who say limits would benefit well-financed special interests.

Secretary of State Robin Carnahan's office has received 101 petitions for proposed changes to the constitution or state statutes for this election cycle.

In 2008, the office received 55 petitions. But just three got enough signatures to get on the ballot.

Alarmed by the idea that more special interest groups are bypassing the legislative process to get changes in law, lawmakers are considering ways to make it harder to get something on the ballot or change the constitution.

Rep. Jason Smith, R-Salem, wants to ask voters to require future amendments get a 60 percent approval margin to pass. Currently, amendments require one vote over 50 percent of ballots cast to carve out new rights and restrictions in the constitution.

"It's way too easy to amend the constitution," Smith told the House general laws committee Tuesday.

But some lawmakers question whether it's the petitioners who are the problem. The General Assembly can place constitutional amendments, proposed changes in law and tax increases before voters by passing a resolution with a simple majority in both houses.

In 2002, for example, the legislature placed six questions on the ballot for voters to decide, while there were just two citizen initiative petitions on the ballot.

"Why don't we make it harder for us to put it on the ballot?" asked Rep. Mike Colona, D-St. Louis.

Smith said that would require a different constitutional amendment.

More signatures?

The committee also held a hearing on another constitutional amendment proposed by Rep. Mike Parson to increase the number of signatures needed to get initiatives on the ballot.
Since 1910, voters have amended Missouri's constitution 164 times. **Voters also have rejected another 121 constitutional amendments in the past 100 years, according to a 2008 study from the Harry S. Truman School of Public Affairs at the University of Missouri.**

Parson, R-Bolivar, said it should be harder to amend the constitution, which trumps state laws and regulations. His proposal would increase the percentage of valid signatures for a constitutional amendment from 8 to 15 percent of the number of voters in the previous gubernatorial election.

For statute changes, Parson proposes requiring groups to gather valid signatures from 10 percent of the voters, up from the current 5 percent requirement.

But Parson's proposal was met with stiff resistance from citizens who are actively trying to get constitutional amendments on the ballot but face an onslaught of legal challenges and have little money to pay for signature gatherers.

Ron Calzone of Dixon, who is pursuing a constitutional amendment to outlaw eminent domain for private development, said Parson's proposal is "an affront" to people's right to propose and pass laws independent of the legislature.

"The real, true grass roots interests are going to have the carpet pulled out from under them," Calzone said. "To double the number of signatures is simply to lay the process at the feet of the special interests" with money.