



RESEARCH SUMMARY
Date Compiled: February 2022

Key takeaways from included research:

- A French study examined lobbying efforts by the alcohol industry and how their efforts have undermined the law surrounding alcohol marketing. Researchers found that industry tactics and arguments were similar to those in other nations and have continuously weakened the French laws. This study can be useful for other countries to anticipate tactics and arguments utilized by the alcohol industry to weaken marketing regulations.
- Research continues to grow around the alcohol-attributable burden of disease. This study found that in 2016, 372,000 deaths and 18.9 million disability-adjusted life years were lost due to alcohol use in the Americas. While the burden varies between countries, alcohol continues to be a leading risk factor for the burden of disease.
- Researchers looked to estimate the risk of injury associated with frequency of drinking and heavy drinking by gender and race/ethnicity. The data they found suggests a greater risk of injury for frequent heavy drinkers among all White and Hispanic respondents and Black women, but not Black men.
- Belgium is one of the many nations to have the legal limit of Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) at 0.05% for the general population and 0.02% for professional drivers. As the government considers imposing a zero-limit for every driver or only novice drivers, researchers sought to evaluate the impacts on drink-driving behavior. While there was no clear evidence for a decrease in alcohol-involved crashes, the relative risk of a crash does increase significantly with increased BAC levels therefore it can be inferred that either of these efforts should decrease impaired driving and its negative consequences.

AN ANALYSIS OF HOW LOBBYING BY THE ALCOHOL INDUSTRY HAS ERODED THE FRENCH ÉVIN LAW SINCE 1991

January 2022

Objective: The French Évin Law was passed in 1991 to prohibit alcohol advertising in media from targeting young people and to regulate content in authorized media. This research analyzes how lobbying by the alcohol industry has undermined this law over the last 30 years.

Method: A narrative approach, consisting of the collection and analysis of semistructured interviews with persons who recount their experience and offer interpretation, was used to analyze lobbying by the alcohol industry against the Évin Law from 1991 to 2020. We conducted 18 interviews with key French informants involved in implementing and/or changing the Évin Law (including founders of the law) to identify strategies and arguments used by the alcohol industry. An established framework of corporate political activity specific to the alcohol industry was used to classify the findings.

Results: The industry tactics and arguments were found to be similar to those in other countries; however, some were specific to France, such as highlighting winegrowing as central to French culture and integrating the wine industry into decision-making bodies, alliances with parliamentarians, and circumventions of the law. These specific features may be explained by the age of the Évin Law (30 years) and the economic weight of alcohol and wine at the heart of French culture.

Conclusions: The Évin Law has been continuously weakened since its initial implementation. This research analyzes the long-term lobbying strategies and arguments that have been used to erode it. The results are useful for other countries that have implemented alcohol marketing regulations to help anticipate tactics and arguments deployed by the alcohol industry to weaken marketing regulations.

Source: Millot, A., Maani, N., Knai, C., Petticrew, M., Guillou-Landréat, M., & Gallopel-Morvan, K. (2022). An Analysis of How Lobbying by the Alcohol Industry Has Eroded the French Évin Law Since 1991. *Journal of studies on alcohol and drugs*, 83(1), 37-44.

ALCOHOL-ATTRIBUTABLE BURDEN OF DISEASE IN THE AMERICAS IN 2000 AND 2016

January 2022

Objective: The purpose of this study was to estimate the alcohol-attributable disease burden in the Americas in 2000 and 2016.

Method: The alcohol-attributable disease burden was estimated using a comparative risk assessment approach. Alcohol exposure and relative risk estimates were obtained from systematic reviews and meta-analyses. Burden of disease estimates were obtained from the World Health Organization's Global Health Estimates.

Results: In 2016, 372,000 deaths and 18.9 million disability-adjusted life years (DALYs) lost were because of alcohol use in the Americas. The age-standardized rates (ASRs) of alcohol-attributable deaths ranged from 16.2 to 54.3 deaths per 100,000 in Jamaica and Guyana, respectively. From 2000 to 2016, ASRs decreased by 12.8% for alcohol-attributable deaths and decreased by 10.8% for alcohol-attributable DALYs lost. The decreases in ASRs for alcohol-attributable deaths and alcohol-attributable DALYs lost were less than the relative decreases in the ASRs for all deaths (18.7%) and all DALYs lost (15.7%). ASRs for alcohol-attributable deaths increased in eight countries.

Conclusions: Alcohol continues to be a leading risk factor for the burden of disease in the Americas, with the degree and composition of this burden varying between countries. Despite a general

reduction across the region, in many countries the rising alcohol-attributable disease burden constitutes a major public health challenge.

Source: Chrystoja, B. R., Monteiro, M., Rehm, J., & Shield, K. (2022). Alcohol-Attributable Burden of Disease in the Americas in 2000 and 2016. *Journal of studies on alcohol and drugs*, 83(1), 45-54.

RACIAL/ETHNIC AND GENDER DIFFERENCES IN RISK OF INJURY AND LIFE-COURSE DRINKING PATTERNS: DATA FROM US NATIONAL ALCOHOL SURVEYS **January 2022**

Aims: To estimate risk of injury associated with frequency of drinking and heavy drinking (5+ drinks on occasion) by gender and race/ethnicity in the US population.

Methods: Data were from a merged sample of two National Alcohol Surveys (telephone and web-based) (2014–2015 and 2019–2020) on 16,639 respondents, and analyzed using Cox proportional hazards models with age as the timescale in a retrospective cohort design. Life-course drinking was determined by age of onset and questions on any drinking and heavy drinking by decade of life. The outcome measure was having had an injury from a serious accident at a certain age.

Results: Frequent heavy drinking (5+ daily, weekly and monthly) was significantly predictive of injury with hazard ratios (HRs) of 2.40, 1.81 and 1.50, respectively, while frequent light drinking (alcohol at least weekly and 5+ yearly or less) was also significant for women (HR = 1.73). For White respondents, 5+ at least weekly was significant for both men (HR = 1.74) and women (HR = 2.42). Among Hispanic respondents, 5+ at least weekly and 5+ monthly were both significant for men (HR = 2.81 and 2.49, respectively) and women (HR = 2.81 and 3.48, respectively). Among Black women, risk was significant for 5+ monthly (HR = 2.90) and for any alcohol \geq weekly (HR = 2.72), but neither frequency of any drinking or 5+ was significant for Blackmen.

Conclusions: Data suggest a greater risk of injury from a serious accident for frequent heavy drinkers among all White and Hispanic respondents, and Black women, but not for Blackmen.

Source: Cherpitel, C. J., Ye, Y., & Kerr, W. C. (2022). Racial/ethnic and gender differences in risk of injury and life-course drinking patterns: data from US national alcohol surveys. *Alcohol and alcoholism*.

LOWERING THE LEGAL ALCOHOL LIMIT IN BELGIUM: POTENTIAL EFFECTS ON THE NUMBER OF TRAFFIC VICTIMS **March 2022**

Background: Since 1994, the legal limit of Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) is 0.5 g/L for the general drivers' population in Belgium. Since 2015, this limit has been lowered to 0.2 g/L for professional drivers. So far, no specific limitation has been adopted for novice drivers in Belgium. Recently, two bills were submitted to the House of Representatives: the first one proposed to impose a zero-limit for every driver, the second one proposed to restrict this zero-limit only to novice drivers.

Objective: The present study evaluated the potential impact of the two bills that aim to reduce the legal BAC limit from 0.5 to zero, either for all drivers or for novice drivers only. We elaborated three scenarios related to the BAC categories for which lowering the legal BAC limit to zero would affect drink-driving behaviour:

“Targeted BAC levels” scenario assumed that the new policy would impact only the specifically targeted BAC category, i.e., drivers in the category BAC below 0.5 g/L.

“Extended impact” scenario corresponded to the “Targeted BAC levels” scenario to which we added a “halo effect” on drivers in the BAC category “ $0.5 \text{ g/L} \leq \text{BAC} < 0.8 \text{ g/L}$ ”.

“Broad range impact” scenario corresponded to the “Extended impact” scenario to where we extended the “halo effect” to drivers in the BAC category “ $0.8 \text{ g/L} \leq \text{BAC} < 1.2 \text{ g/L}$ ”.

Methods: The effect estimates were based on firstly, scientific literature on risks related to drink-driving at different BAC-levels, secondly data on crashes in Belgium and thirdly data on drink-driving behaviour in Belgium and in other European countries.

Results: In case of a zero limit for all drivers, an annual reduction can be expected of 10 to 17 fatalities (i.e., a decrease of 2.4% to 3.9%), 8 to 20 severe injuries (i.e., a decrease of 0.3% to 0.8%) and 135 to 315 slight injuries (i.e., a decrease of 0.4% to 0.8%). In case a zero limit is only applied to novice drivers, an annual decrease can be expected by 2 to 4 fatalities (i.e., a decline of 3.7% to 6.2%), 8 to 16 serious injuries and 135 to 262 slight injuries (i.e., a decline of 1.7% to 3.2% in both cases).

Discussion: There is no clear evidence on which of the three scenarios would be the most plausible. As the relative risk of a car crash increases strongly with the BAC level, the success of either measure will strongly depend on its ability to also affect drink driving at concentrations that are forbidden already. This also means that most of the casualties could be prevented if compliance with current rules increased.

Source: Moreau, N., Martensen, H., & Daniels, S. (2022). Lowering the legal alcohol limit in Belgium: potential effects on the number of traffic victims. *Accident Analysis & Prevention*, 166, 106542.