



**RESEARCH SUMMARY**  
Date Compiled: May 2023

**Key takeaways from included research:**

- An Australian study surveyed over 2,500 people to inquire about harms they had experienced from drinking of family, friends, colleagues, and the general public. They found that over one-third of adults reported experiencing negative impacts, particularly among women, younger people and heavier drinkers.
- A study was conducted in California to examine the relationship between alcohol outlets and crime. Researchers found that assaults and driving under the influence during weekend evening hours were more frequent in census block groups with a greater concentration of bars/pubs while burglaries were more prevalent in areas with more restaurants. They suggested prevention programs and policies that focus on specific establishments as well as days and times may be the most effective at reducing the associated harms.
- Researchers highlighted how stigmatized alcohol problems can be resulting in additional harms for those with an alcohol use disorder (AUD). They highlighted that public health efforts must address societal misunderstandings and myths about alcohol use and the associated problems. The language the population – policymakers, clinicians, researchers, and others use are key to de-stigmatizing AUD.
- A study was conducted to examine whether drinking patterns of individuals from diverse countries are associated with alcohol control policies as measured by the International Alcohol Control (IAC) Policy Index. After examining adult drinking from 10 countries, it was concluded that the IAC Policy index was associated with volume and frequency of drinking. However, the higher the IAC Policy Index score, the lower the quantity consumed, therefore it is imperative to implement alcohol policies to reduce alcohol consumption and the associated harms around the world.

## **ALCOHOL'S HARM TO OTHERS IN 2021: WHO BEARS THE BURDEN?**

April 2023

**Background and aims:** Alcohol's harm to others (AHTO) has become a key driver of national and international alcohol policy. This study aimed to produce a contemporary, comprehensive estimate of the correlates and harms from others' drinking in 2021 in Australia.

**Design, setting, participants, measurements:** Across Australia, 2,574 adults (1,380 women; 1,172 men) were sampled via two cross-sectional survey modes: a random digit dial mobile phone sample of 1,000 people and 1,574 people from the Life in Australia™ panel survey. Participants in 2021 were asked about harms they had experienced from the drinking of family, friends, co-workers and the public in the past year. Applying combined sample weights from each mode, bivariable and adjusted multivariable logistic regressions were used to analyse differences in rates of AHTO by participant gender, age, residence in rural or metropolitan regions, country of birth, education and employment.

**Findings:** In 2021, 23.6% reported being negatively affected by strangers' drinking and 21.3% by the drinking of someone they knew, with 34.3% reporting being negatively affected a lot or a little by either. 42.4% of respondents reported specific harms from strangers' drinking. Thus, 48.1% of respondents reported any harm (negative effects or specific harms) from others' drinking. Women, younger people, Australian-born and heavier episodic drinkers reported significantly higher rates of AHTO compared with other respondents. Smaller percentages (7.5%) of participants reported being harmed substantially by others' drinking, including by people they knew (5.8%) or strangers (2.3%). Stratified analyses showed that heavier drinking, furloughed, younger, men who were born overseas in English-speaking countries were affected by others' drinking, whereas women were affected regardless of these factors (apart from age).

**Conclusions:** Over one-third of Australian adults appear to have been negatively affected by others' drinking in 2021, with women, younger people and heavier drinkers at more risk. Substantial harm appears to be more likely to arise from the drinking of people Australians know than from strangers' drinking.

**Source:** A. M. Laslett, R. Room, S. Kuntsche, D. Anderson-Luxford, B. Willoughby, C. Doran, R. Jenkinson, K. Smit, D. Egerton-Warburton, & H. Jiang. (2023). Alcohol's harm to others in 2021: who bears the burden? <https://doi.org/10.1111/add.16205>

## **MICRO-TEMPORAL ANALYSES OF CRIME RELATED TO ALCOHOL OUTLETS: A COMPARISON OF OUTCOMES OVER WEEKDAY, WEEKEND, DAYTIME AND NIGHTTIME HOURS**

March 2023

**Introduction:** Causal relationships between alcohol outlets and crime are inferred from their statistical associations across neighbourhoods. However, many unobserved covariates may confound these effects. Recognising that outlet sales vary by time of day and day of week, we assess whether areas with more bars/pubs, restaurants or off-premise outlets have more crime during days and times when alcohol sales are greatest.

**Methods:** Annual administrative crime counts, sociodemographic data and other area characteristics of 336 Census block groups in Oakland, California, USA, were related to outlet densities from 2000 to 2015. Bayesian space-time Poisson models were used to measure associations between outlet densities and crime during: (i) weekday daytime; (ii) weekday nighttime; (iii) weekend daytime; and (iv) weekend nighttime periods (four seemingly unrelated equations). Comparisons of parameter estimates across equations provided an assessment of outlet effects on crime across days and times within the same analysis units using the same constellation of confounding covariates.

**Results:** Assault and driving under the influence crime incidents during weekend evening hours were more frequent in Census block group areas with greater numbers of bar/pubs. Burglaries were consistently greater in areas with greater densities of restaurants.

**Discussion and Conclusions:** The spatiotemporal signature relating densities of bars/pubs over weekend evening hours to assault and driving under the influence incidents suggests that these outlets are a critical source of these crimes across neighbourhoods. Prevention programs and policies that focus upon specific drinking establishments, days and times may be most effective in reducing assault and impaired driving incidents in neighbourhoods.

**Source:** Gruenewald, P. J., Sumetsky, N., Mair, C., Lee, J. P., & Ponicki, W. R. (2023). Micro-temporal analyses of crime related to alcohol outlets: A comparison of outcomes over weekday, weekend, daytime and nighttime hours. *Drug and alcohol review*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/dar.13644>

## **WHY STIGMA MATTERS IN ADDRESSING ALCOHOL HARM**

**April 2023**

### **Abstract**

Alcohol problems are amongst the most stigmatised of conditions, resulting in multiple additional harms for people with alcohol use disorder. Alcohol stigma encompasses widely endorsed negative stereotypes leading to prejudice and discrimination towards people with alcohol use disorder. Self-stigma further harms individuals through preventing and undermining recovery. The persistence of alcohol stigma highlights the limitations of an illness model of alcohol use disorder for stigma reduction; in fact, many groups inadvertently reinforce stigma by emphasising the artificial line between 'normal' drinkers and the pathologised 'alcoholic other'. A public health case for alcohol stigma reduction highlights the need to address this societal false dichotomisation of problem drinkers. Promoting a continuum-aligned model of alcohol use disorder, a dynamic model of responsibility, and other evidence-led approaches such as person-first language by key stakeholders are recommended.

**Source:** Morris, J., & Schomerus, G. (2023). Why stigma matters in addressing alcohol harm. *Drug and Alcohol Review*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/dar.13660>

## **EFFECTIVE ALCOHOL POLICIES ARE ASSOCIATED WITH REDUCED CONSUMPTION AMONG DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS WHO DRINK HEAVILY**

**April 2023**

**Background:** Alcohol policies stand out among other noncommunicable disease-relevant policies for the lack of uptake. Composite indicators have been developed to measure the effects of alcohol control policy. We investigated whether drinking patterns among demographic groups from general population samples of drinkers from diverse countries are associated with alcohol control policy as measured by the International Alcohol Control (IAC) Policy Index.

**Methods:** Representative samples of adult drinkers from 10 countries (five high-income and five middle-income) were surveyed about alcohol consumption, using beverage and location-specific questions.

**Measurements:** The IAC Policy Index was analyzed with frequency, typical occasion quantity, and volume consumed. Analyses used mixed models that included interactions between country IAC Policy Index score and age group, gender, and education level.

**Findings:** Each increase in IAC policy index score (reflecting more effective alcohol policy) was associated with a 13.9% decrease in drinking frequency ( $p = 0.006$ ) and a 16.5% decrease in volume

( $p = 0.001$ ). With each increase in IAC Policy Index score, both genders decreased for all three measures, but men less so than women. Women decreased their typical occasion quantity by 1.2% ( $p = 0.006$ ), frequency by 3.1% ( $p < 0.001$ ), and total volume by 4.2% ( $p < 0.001$ ) compared to men. Low and mid-education groups decreased their typical occasion quantity by 2.6% ( $p < 0.001$ ) and 1.6% ( $p = 0.001$ ), respectively, compared to high education, while for drinking frequency the low education group increased by 7.0% ( $p < 0.001$ ). There was an overall effect of age ( $F = 19.27$ ,  $p < 0.0001$ ), with 18–19 and 20–24-year-olds showing the largest decreases in typical occasion quantity with increasing IAC policy index score.

**Conclusions:** The IAC Policy Index, reflecting four effective policies, was associated with volume and frequency of drinking across 10 diverse countries. Each increase in the IAC Policy Index was associated with lower typical quantities consumed among groups reporting heavy drinking: young adults and less well-educated. There is value in implementing such alcohol policies and a need to accelerate their uptake globally.

**Source:** Casswell, S., Huckle, T., Parker, K., Graydon-Guy, T., Leung, J., Parry, C. D., ... & Randerson, S. (2023). Effective alcohol policies are associated with reduced consumption among demographic groups who drink heavily. *Alcohol: Clinical and Experimental Research*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/acer.15030>