



RESEARCH SUMMARY
Date Compiled: June 2019

Key Takeaways from Included Research

- Three-tier alcohol control systems were developed to protect public health and safety and to ensure an alcohol market. Direct shipping practices which bypass alcohol control systems have been shown to be problematic.
- Routine public health surveillance of alcohol outlet density is important to identify problem areas and detect emerging ones. The 3 main approaches for measuring density are container-based (e.g., number of outlets in a county), distance-based (e.g., average distance between a college and outlets), and spatial access-based (e.g., weighted distance between town center and outlets). Each approach has benefits and drawbacks.
- Official campus alcohol policies (CAPs) are an important element in reducing negative consequences of alcohol consumption on college campuses, but a survey of the CAPs retrieved from the websites of the 15 member schools of the Maryland Collaborative to Reduce College Drinking and Related Problems found that at least half of the schools had less than half of the possible policies rated most or somewhat effective by expert panels.
- A mass media campaign was associated with an increase in awareness of alcohol as a risk factor for cancer as well as higher support for some alcohol policies (minimum unit pricing, a ban on alcohol advertising, and mandatory nutrition labelling) but not others (limiting number of retail outlets and limiting sale hours) – at the population level
- A series of recommendations to prevent and reduce cancer among older adults includes the community-based policy strategies offered the Community Guide to limit excessive alcohol consumption, as well as clinical preventive strategies like screening, brief intervention, and referral to treatment (SBIRT).
- The findings of three social laboratory experiments suggested that the presence of alcohol caused dehumanization and greater perceived sexual availability of women, with perception of women's intoxication intensifying the effect.

DIRECT SHIPMENT OF ALCOHOL: ARE WE THERE YET?

May 2019

Extract

...Alcohol is not the same as toothpaste or books. While direct shipment of alcohol products to residents may seem innocuous to some, this method of sale stands in contradiction to the system of alcohol sales in most states. These systems have built-in safeguards for product safety and tax collection as well as preventing sales to underage youth and intoxicated persons. These safeguards either do not exist with direct sales or the regulations are ineffective.

Our state-based systems are characterized by three distinct tiers. All states have some form of this system. It is a closed system of product sale requiring all licensed suppliers to sell only to licensed wholesalers who must only sell to licensed retailers. This stops the trafficking of products that are unsafe or counterfeit. Since the wholesaler must track each bottle and can, recalls are amazingly swift in pulling products before harm is done ...

But there are other problems with direct shipment. Most states allow some form of direct shipment of wine and a small number allow shipment of beer and/or spirits. In seventeen "control states," state government has ownership of some aspect of the alcohol business...usually the wholesale and some type of retailing. In most cases, this involves the spirits business and sometimes wine and beer. The profits from these businesses are a major source of funds for local and state government who must pay for some of the harmful impacts of alcohol abuse. If direct shipment for spirits became widespread, it could mean a reduction in revenue for these states.

States that allow shipping usually require licensing, have limits on how much can be shipped, require package labeling and insist that the product be delivered to an adult who also signs for the package. But, tests from a few states have found very low compliance levels. They found that too often shippers failed to check ID, left alcohol at the door without the required signature, and taxes were not collected. The Illinois Liquor Control Commission issued over 100 cease-and-desist letters to retailers, wineries and fulfillment centers in 2015. The Michigan Attorney General has sent over 300 cease-and-desist letters since 2016. A study done by researchers at the University of North Carolina concluded that "age verification procedures used by Internet alcohol vendors do not adequately prevent online sales to minors."

One reason few states do little enforcement is that it is difficult and somewhat overwhelming. With almost 20,000 suppliers the potential universe is huge. And now there is a push to allow out of state retailers to ship. Enforcement for this universe is truly mind-boggling. In Michigan alone there are about 16,000 off-premise retailers of beer, wine and spirits. The total number of alcohol retailers nation-wide is over 600,000! ...

The conclusion is that we are not there yet if the goal is a safe system with a high level of compliance including tax collection and avoidance of sales to minors. ... Designing a different system that bypasses our in-state licensees increases the risk to public safety, creates greater access for youth, involves non-payment of taxes and increases the potential for counterfeit activity. We can do better than that.

Source: Healthy Alcohol Marketplace

Free full text: <http://healthyalcoholmarket.com/wordpress/>

MEASURING ALCOHOL OUTLET DENSITY: AN OVERVIEW OF STRATEGIES FOR PUBLIC HEALTH PRACTITIONERS

May 2019

Abstract

Context: Excessive alcohol use is responsible for 88 000 deaths in the United States annually and cost the United States \$249 billion in 2010. There is strong scientific evidence that regulating alcohol outlet density is an effective intervention for reducing excessive alcohol consumption and related harms, but there is no standard method for measuring this exposure.

Program: We overview the strategies available for measuring outlet density, discuss their advantages and disadvantages, and provide examples of how they can be applied in practice.

Implementation: The 3 main approaches for measuring density are container-based (e.g., number of outlets in a county), distance-based (e.g., average distance between a college and outlets), and spatial access-based (e.g., weighted distance between town center and outlets).

Evaluation: While container-based measures are the simplest to calculate and most intuitive, distance-based or spatial access-based measures are unconstrained by geopolitical boundaries and allow for assessment of clustering (an amplifier of certain alcohol-related harms). Spatial access-based measures can also be adjusted for population size/demographics but are the most resource-intensive to produce.

Discussion: Alcohol outlet density varies widely across and between locations and over time, which is why it is important to measure it. Routine public health surveillance of alcohol outlet density is important to identify problem areas and detect emerging ones. Distance- or spatial access-based measures of alcohol outlet density are more resource-intensive than container-based measures but provide a much more accurate assessment of exposure to alcohol outlets and can be used to assess clustering, which is particularly important when assessing the relationship between density and alcohol-related harms, such as violent crime.

Source:

Sacks, J. J., Brewer, R. D., Mesnick, J., Holt, J. B., Zhang, X., Kanny, D., et al. (2019). Measuring alcohol outlet density: An overview of strategies for public health practitioners. *Journal of Public Health Management and Practice*.

Free full text: <https://insights.ovid.com/crossref?an=00124784-900000000-99368>

ASSESSING CAMPUS ALCOHOL POLICIES: MEASURING ACCESSIBILITY, CLARITY, AND EFFECTIVENESS

March 2019

Abstract

Background: Excessive alcohol consumption poses significant hazards to health and safety on college campuses. While substantial research exists regarding effective policies for preventing alcohol-related problems in the communities surrounding campuses, on-campus alcohol policies have received far less attention.

Methods: Official campus alcohol policies (CAPs) were retrieved from the websites of the 15 member schools of the Maryland Collaborative to Reduce College Drinking and Related Problems, a voluntary statewide collaborative. CAPs were assessed for accessibility, clarity, and effectiveness. In addition to assessing whether campuses were in compliance with federal regulations for comprehensiveness of policies, a measure of likely policy effectiveness was developed through the use of 2 Delphi panels drawing on alcohol policy researchers and on-campus and community practitioners, respectively. The panels rated 35 potential policies and 13 possible sanctions; lists of policies and sanctions were compiled primarily from what was already in existence at 1 or more member schools.

Results: For most campuses, the CAPs could be located within 30 seconds, but tended to be spread across multiple web pages. Language used to communicate the policies tended to be complex and above the reading level of someone with a high school education. At least half of the schools had less than half of the possible policies rated most or somewhat effective by the Delphi panels. Schools were more likely to employ the most effective sanctions, but somewhat and ineffective sanctions were also not uncommon.

Conclusions: CAPs are an important element in reducing negative consequences of alcohol consumption on college campuses. A higher level of research scrutiny is warranted to understand the extent to which CAPs are associated with excessive drinking, but this research describes an evidence- and expert-informed assessment approach that colleges can use to regularly analyze and update their CAPS.

Source:

Jernigan, D. H., Shields, K., Mitchell, M., & Arria, A. M. (2019). Assessing campus alcohol policies: Measuring accessibility, clarity, and effectiveness. *Alcoholism: Clinical and Experimental Research*.

Additional media coverage:

[Most college alcohol policies fall short of 'most effective,' study says](#) (UPI)

CAN A MASS MEDIA CAMPAIGN RAISE AWARENESS OF ALCOHOL AS A RISK FACTOR FOR CANCER AND PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR ALCOHOL RELATED POLICIES?

May 2019

Abstract:

Alcohol consumption increases the risk of several cancers, but public awareness of alcohol as a risk factor for cancer is low. Research indicates that public opinion about alcohol related policies can be influenced by mass media campaigns and awareness of alcohol as a carcinogen. The objective of this study was to test whether a mass media campaign intended to raise awareness of the relation between alcohol and cancer is associated with higher public awareness of alcohol as a risk factor for cancer, and higher levels of support for alcohol related policies. Cross-sectional surveys of a nationally representative sample of N = 6000 Danish adults were conducted pre- (n = 3000) and post campaign (n = 3000) in 2017–2018.

Awareness of alcohol as a cancer risk factor significantly increased between the pre and post campaign survey (approximately 5 percentage points). The proportion of respondents who supported minimum unit pricing, a ban on alcohol advertising, and mandatory nutrition labelling was significantly higher post campaign than pre campaign, while support for limited number of retail outlets and limited sale hours were unchanged. For males, but not females, higher support for an 18 year age limit for purchasing alcohol, age limits for buying alcohol at secondary education school parties, and increased

enforcement of age limits was found after the campaign than prior to it. Conclusively, the results show that a mass media campaign was associated with an increase in awareness of alcohol as a risk factor for cancer as well as alcohol policy support at a population level.

Source:

Christensen, A. S. P., Meyer, M. K. H., Dalum, P., & Krarup, A. F. (2019). Can a mass media campaign raise awareness of alcohol as a risk factor for cancer and public support for alcohol related policies? *Preventive Medicine*

CANCER RISK AMONG OLDER ADULTS: TIME FOR CANCER PREVENTION TO GO SILVER

May 2019

Abstract

Over two-thirds of all new cancers are diagnosed among adults aged ≥ 60 years. As the number of adults living to older ages continues to increase, so too will the number of new cancer cases. Can we do more as a society to reduce cancer risk and preserve health as adults enter their 60s, 70s, and beyond? Cancer development is a multi-step process involving a combination of factors. Each cancer risk factor represents a component of cancer causation, and opportunities to prevent cancer may exist at any time up to the final component, even years after the first. The characteristics of the community in which one lives often shape cancer risk-related behaviors and exposures over time, making communities an ideal setting for efforts to reduce cancer risk at a population level. A comprehensive approach to cancer prevention at older ages would lower exposures to known causes of cancer, promote healthy social and physical environments, expand the appropriate use of clinical preventive services, and engage older adults in these efforts. The collection of articles in this supplement provide innovative insights for exciting new directions in research and practice to expand cancer prevention efforts for older adults. This brief commentary sets the stage for the papers that follow.

Source:

White, M. C., Holman, D. M., Goodman, R. A., & Richardson, L. C. (2019). Cancer risk among older adults: Time for cancer prevention to go silver. *The Gerontologist*

Free full text: https://academic.oup.com/gerontologist/article/59/Supplement_1/S1/5491140

SHE LOOKS LIKE SHE'D BE AN ANIMAL IN BED: DEHUMANIZATION OF DRINKING WOMEN IN SOCIAL CONTEXTS

May 2019

Abstract

The purpose of the present research was to examine the perceptions of women who drink in social contexts through the lens of dehumanization (Haslam 2006). Across three experiments, we manipulated the presence of alcohol by depicting a woman at a bar with a bottle of beer or a bottle of water and measured dehumanization. As hypothesized, women were dehumanized more in the alcohol condition than in the water condition by men (Experiments 1–3) and women (Experiments 2 and 3). Notably, the presence of alcohol compared to water had no impact on dehumanization of men (Experiment 2). Also, as hypothesized, perceived intoxication emerged as a significant mediator of the link between alcohol condition and dehumanization in Experiments 1 and 2, and alcohol quantity predicted greater dehumanization in Experiment 3. Extending the present work to prior work in this

area, Experiment 3 also examined the links among alcohol, perceived sexual availability, and dehumanization, revealing that perceived sexual availability mediated the link between alcohol and dehumanization. Implications for theories of dehumanization, alcohol, and social perception as well as practical implications of these findings are discussed.

Source:

Riemer, A. R., Gervais, S. J., Skorinko, J. L., Douglas, S. M., Spencer, H., Nugai, K., et al. (2019). She looks like she'd be an animal in bed: Dehumanization of drinking women in social contexts. *Sex Roles*, 80(9-10), 617-629.

Additional media coverage:

[Women, alcohol and perceived 'sexual availability'](#) (New York Times)

[New study finds women who drink alcohol are seen as 'less human'](#) (The Swaddle)