

# Behavioural indicators of motives for barroom aggression: Implications for preventing bar violence

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## **Abstract**

Introduction and Aims. To develop new strategies for preventing violence in high-risk licensed premises, we identify behavioural indicators of apparent motives for aggression in these settings and outline the implications of different motivations for prevention. Design and Methods. The four types of motives for aggressive or coercive acts defined by the theory of coercive actions framed the research: gaining compliance, expressing grievances/restoring justice, attaining a favourable social identity and pursuing fun/excitement. Incidents of aggression from the Safer Bars evaluation research were analysed to identify behavioural indicators of each motivation. Results. Compliance-motivated aggression typically takes the form of unwanted social overtures, third party intervention to stop conflicts or staff rule enforcement. Prevention strategies include keeping the aggressor's focus on compliance to avoid provoking grievance and identity motives that are likely to escalate aggression. Grievance motives are typically elicited by perceived

wrongdoing and therefore prevention should focus on eliminating sources of grievances and adopting policies/practices to resolve grievances peacefully. Social identity motives are endemic to many drinking establishments especially among male patrons and staff. Prevention involves reducing identity cues in the environment, hiring staff who do not have identity concerns, and training staff to avoid provoking identity concerns. Aggression motivated by fun/excitement often involves low-level aggression where escalation can be prevented by avoiding grievances and attacks on identity. Discussion and Conclusions. Knowledge of behavioural indicators of motives can be used to enhance staff hiring and training practices, reduce environmental triggers for aggression, and develop policies to reduce motivation for aggression.

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