

Reducing harm in drinking environments. A systematic review of effective approaches

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Abstract

This systematic review examined the effectiveness of a range of intervention approaches designed to reduce harm in drinking environments. Introduction Techniques used to reduce harm in drinking environments range from rigorous police enforcement of licensing and other legislation to co-operative approaches that seek to train staff in licensed premises and engage nightlife industries in socially responsible operating. With authorities often stretched to manage intoxication and related problems in busy drinking environments, understanding which interventions can have most effects on reducing alcohol-related harm is critical. This report provides the findings from a systematic literature review that aimed to explore the effects of interventions implemented in drinking environments on a range of harms, including alcohol consumption, under-age alcohol sales, violence and road traffic crashes. Methods The review was based on a literature search of 10 databases including Medline, PsycINFO, ASSIA and other sources. Two reviewers independently assessed studies for inclusion against the following criteria: published since 1990, and examined an intervention with the aim of reducing harm associated with alcohol consumption, which was delivered in a drinking environment and targeted individuals, licensed alcohol serving outlets, or the sale and supply of alcohol via the off trade. Intervention studies of any design were eligible for inclusion. Conclusions There is growing evidence that effective delivery of multi-component programmes in drinking environments can reduce

alcohol-related harm, however, further research is required to assess the transferability of evidence about multi-component programmes in drinking environments to other settings.

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