

Can training bar staff in responsible serving practices reduce alcohol-related harm?

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Published

Thursday, January 1, 1998 - 12:00

Publisher

Drug and Alcohol Review

Volume

17

Issue

1

Page(s)

39-50

Abstract

A responsible service training program aimed at reducing alcohol-related harm was implemented in a popular entertainment area over several months in 1992 - 93. A number of evaluation measures were used: breath tests on 872 patrons from selected venues; drink driving data; risk assessments; the use of "pseudo patrons;" and knowledge and attitude changes among 88 trained bar staff. Compared with control sites, the intervention sites showed an immediate pre- to post-test reduction in patrons rated by researchers as extremely drunk and an eventual reduction from pretest to follow-up in patrons with blood alcohol levels (BALs) > 0.08 . There was also a significant increase in knowledge among bar staff. There was no significant reduction in patrons with BALs > 0.15 or in the number of drink driving offences from intervention sites during the study period. Pseudo drunk patrons were rarely refused service, identification was rarely checked and nonphotographic identification was accepted on most occasions. The less than satisfactory outcome is attributed to poor implementation of the training and a lack of support among managers. The positive results from one venue, whose manager embraced the program, served to highlight the importance of management support. (PsycINFO Database Record (c) 2009 APA,

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