

Stricter policies linked to lower rates of alcohol-related injuries

International study finds government restrictions on drinking curbs injuries despite alcohol use rates and patterns

Emeryville, CA (June 27, 2018): Countries with stricter alcohol policies had lower rates of alcohol-related injuries, regardless of individual consumption rates and drinking patterns, and country-level drinking patterns, a new study from the Alcohol Research Group (ARG), a program of the Public Health Institute, found. The study was published today in *Addiction*.

To assess the effect of country-level alcohol policies, the researchers used the International Alcohol Policy and Injury Index (IAPII), which includes policies related to the physical availability of alcohol, vehicle use limitations, advertising and promotional restrictions, and drinking environment, such as host and server laws. The IAPII was developed to measure the impact of several alcohol-related policies on injury rates within an international context and is one of the only measures that includes policy enforcement.

“The difficulty in doing this kind of work is that country-level drinking rates and patterns are not consistent across studies, making it hard to determine who is at greatest risk for injury,” said ARG Senior Scientist and lead author, [Cheryl J. Cherpitel](#), DrPH. “Our research suggests a country’s policy environment that includes various levels of alcohol-control laws and regulations may be a better predictor of injury risk than consumption levels.”

The study used data from 62 emergency departments in 28 countries and included over 14,000 injured patients. Interviews were conducted within six hours of receiving the injury and included questions about their alcohol consumption and if they associated their drinking with the injury.

“I hope our results increase awareness of how policies can be used to measure and predict drinking-related outcomes,” added Cherpitel. “It’s important that future research considers adopting these measures to better assess other types of impacts of alcohol use such as harms to others.”

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Cherpitel, C.J., Witbrodt, J., Korcha, R.A., Ye, Y., Kool, B., Monteiro, M. (2018). Multi-level analysis of alcohol-related injury, societal drinking pattern and alcohol control policy: emergency department data from 28 countries. *Addiction*: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/add.14276>

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