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Covering drunk driving, alcohol addiction, and criminal justice.



Higher Hospital Admissions in UK, Is Alcohol to Blame?

ALCOHOL MISUSE & ABUSE GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE / NOV 12, 2018 / SOBERING UP ADMINISTRATOR

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Higher hospital admissions rates in the UK could be linked to alcohol vendors, according to a recently released study conducted by the University of Sheffield's School of Health and Related Research (ScHARR).

Alcohol-Related Hospital Admissions Linked to Alcohol Vendors

The study, funded by Alcohol Research UK, is the largest of its kind worldwide and reviewed data on over one million hospital admissions in all 32,482 census areas of England over a 12-year period.

The research found that areas with the highest concentrations of bars, pubs, and nightclubs had a 13% higher admissions rate of acute conditions caused by alcohol consumption—including vomiting and drunkenness—at nearby hospitals. Additionally, hospital admissions rates in these areas had a 22% increase in chronic alcohol-related conditions like liver disease, compared to places with the lowest density of alcohol outlets.

Researchers also looked at areas with high concentrations of other types of establishments licensed to sell alcohol and found similar results:

- Areas with the highest density of restaurants saw a 9% increase in hospital admissions for acute alcohol-related conditions and a 9% increase for chronic conditions
- Areas with the highest concentration of on-trade outlets (hotels, casinos, and sports clubs) experienced an increase in hospital admissions of 12% for acute conditions and 19% for chronic conditions caused by alcohol
- Areas with the highest density of convenience stores licensed to sell alcohol saw a 10% increase in hospital admissions for acute alcohol-related conditions and a 7% increase for chronic conditions

The University's Professor of Epidemiology and Public Health, Ravi Maheswaran, noted, "Although we have observed clear associations between alcohol outlet densities and hospital admissions, our study cannot confirm if these associations are causally linked...However, there is emerging evidence from other studies suggesting that local licensing enforcement could reduce alcohol-related harms."

Could Alcohol Licensing Play a Role?

Potential implications of the study note that local alcohol licensing decisions may have an impact on the burden of area hospitals and health of the local population.

Dr. James Nicholls, the Director of Research and Policy Development at Alcohol Research UK believes that those responsible for alcohol licensing and regulations should take note of the study's findings.

"We often hear that no individual outlet can be held responsible for increased hospital admissions, and because of this, licensing teams can't plan on that basis. However, this study

adds weight to the argument that licensing needs to also think about the overall level of availability in a given area."

"Understanding the relationship between outlet density and alcohol hospital admissions is essential to reducing harm. Local licensing authorities, in particular, need to factor this information into their decisions," he added.



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