



RESEARCH SUMMARY

Date Compiled: October 2019

Key Takeaways from Included Research

- An analysis of alcohol excise taxes at the state level, compared with data on the costs of alcohol-related harms to states, found that (1) specific excise taxes account for one fifth of state alcohol taxes in the 32 license states; but (2) even considering all tax types, total alcohol taxes account for only one tenth of alcohol-related costs. The authors suggest increasing alcohol taxes to improve public health and reduce the disparity between alcohol-related costs and total alcohol taxes in states.
- An analysis of state-level alcohol excise tax changes in relation to child maltreatment rates found that increased tax rates were associated with decreased maltreatment rates, and vice versa. This makes increasing alcohol taxes “a particularly attractive lever for improving social welfare.”
- In response to the alcohol-related death of a 14-year-old girl, a number of Canadian prevention organizations have suggested common sense regulatory prevention measures which could prevent alcohol-related harms associated with high-strength alcopops.
- A review of studies examining the relationship between alcohol and suicide confirms that excessive alcohol consumption (chronic and acute) has been shown to be major risk factor for suicide. Policy interventions like increased alcohol taxes or restrictions on alcohol availability that serve to decrease alcohol use and alcohol use disorder in general population can help prevent and reduce this problem.
- A study from the American College of Cardiology found that a single binge-drinking episode can have negative effects on cardiovascular functioning.

THE COMPOSITION AND MAGNITUDE OF ALCOHOL TAXES IN STATES: DO THEY COVER ALCOHOL-RELATED COSTS?

September 2019

Abstract

Objective: At least one type of tax is applied to the sale of alcoholic beverages in all U.S. states. The purpose of this study was to characterize the composition and magnitude of alcohol taxes in states and to assess the relationship between total alcohol taxes (federal plus state) and the cost of excessive drinking.

Method: The amount of tax (in dollars per standard drink) by state was estimated from data on state ad valorem excise, specific excise, and sales taxes in 2010 obtained from the Alcohol Policy Information System and Tax Foundation. These taxes were summed, and specific excise taxes were assessed as a proportion of total state taxes. Tax data on beer were analyzed for all 50 states. Tax data for wine and distilled spirits were restricted to the 32 license states and Washington, D.C., with fully privatized distribution systems. Total alcohol taxes for the 32 license states were compared on a per-drink basis with published state estimates of the cost of excessive drinking in these states in 2010.

Results: Specific excise taxes accounted for a weighted median of 20.1% of total state alcohol tax revenue in the 32 license states and Washington, D.C. The median total alcohol tax per drink (based on all federal and state taxes) was \$0.21, which accounted for 26.7% of the median cost to government and 10.3% of the median total economic cost of excessive drinking.

Conclusions: Specific excise taxes account for one fifth of state alcohol taxes in the 32 license states; but even considering all tax types, total alcohol taxes account for only one tenth of alcohol-related costs

Source:

Blanchette, J. G., Chaloupka, F. J., & Naimi, T. S. (2019). The composition and magnitude of alcohol taxes in states: Do they cover alcohol-related costs? *Journal of Studies on Alcohol and Drugs*, 80(4), 408-414.

Free full text: <https://www.jsad.com/doi/full/10.15288/jsad.2019.80.408>

ALCOHOL TAXATION AND CHILD MALTREATMENT

September 2019

Extract

More than 3.4 million children were the subject of a child maltreatment investigation or alternative response in the United States during 2016. The prevalence of child maltreatment is disturbing, with at least 37% of children being investigated for abuse or neglect during their childhood. While the emotional cost of this harm cannot be quantified, the lifetime economic cost of child maltreatment exceeds one hundred billion dollars annually. Due to the large number of children at risk and the significant cost, the prevention of child maltreatment is a significant public health concern.

One policy response not frequently discussed is increasing alcohol tax rates. An increase in the tax on alcohol raises the cost of alcohol consumption, causing some people to stop or reduce their drinking. The reduction in alcohol consumption could, in turn, reduce child maltreatment. This might occur because alcohol is a factor in 40% of child maltreatment cases...

... Taken as a whole, the findings suggest that changes in alcohol tax rates are inversely related to the incidence of child abuse and neglect. More specifically, alcohol tax rate increases are associated with decreases in the various types of child maltreatment, whereas alcohol tax rate decreases are associated with increases in child maltreatment ...

The results of this study suggest that changes in state-level alcohol taxes predict changes in state-level child maltreatment rates. The relationship is inverse, which means that increases in the alcohol tax rate are associated with decreases in child maltreatment. This relationship holds true regardless of whether the alcohol tax is levied on beer, wine, or spirits . The fact that alcohol tax increases yield a number of additional benefits (e.g., reduced drunk driving) makes increasing alcohol taxes a particularly attractive lever for improving social welfare.

Source:

McLaughlin, M. (2019). Alcohol taxation and child maltreatment, U. J. L. & Pol'y 151(58).

Free full text:

https://openscholarship.wustl.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2072&context=law_journal_law_policy

WHY NOT PREVENT ALCOHOL-RELATED PROBLEMS BEFORE A DEATH OCCURS?

September 2019

Extract

... As incidents of alcohol poisoning among teens have increased in Canada in recent years, a number of common-sense recommendations have been made in an attempt to rein in how these products are made, sold, packaged and advertised ...

Recommendations have been made by the Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse and Addiction (CCSA), the Quebec Coroner, and Éduc'alcool, a not-for-profit involved in education, information and prevention ...

Recommendations from these Canadian organizations included:

smaller serving size – some of these products contain up to 4 servings in a can that can't be re-sealed. In May, the Canadian government lowered the maximum number of servings per container to 1.5.

lower alcohol levels and less sugar – With a sweetness level equivalent to 13 teaspoons of sugar, the alcohol may not be easy to taste, despite being up to 12% in some products. In June, Canada banned sugary drinks with more than 7% alcohol from being sold in convenience stores.

a minimum price for alcohol – price-sensitive youth and heavy drinkers are attracted to lower prices for more alcohol

restricting access to sugary alcohol drinks – because this product is made from malt liquor, it can legally be sold at convenience stores which have more locations and are open longer hours. If it were made from spirits, it would have to be sold where liquor is sold, in fewer locations and during fewer hours.

no names that glorify inebriation – between January and November 2017, over 2,000 12-24 year-olds in Quebec were admitted to a hospital for acute alcohol poisoning– an average of 7 every day.

Deaths from alcohol poisoning in Canada have increased by 37% over the past 10 years from 210 in 2007, to 313 in 2014.

no marketing to young people – regulation on marketing to youth should take into account online ads which can be narrowly targeted

no kid-targeted packaging – sugary alcohol in packaging using bright colors and fonts that are meant to be attractive to teens are almost indistinguishable from sodas. Many countries have restrictions on packaging that might appeal to youth.

Free full text: <http://healthyalcoholmarket.com>

SUICIDAL BEHAVIOR: LINKS BETWEEN ALCOHOL USE DISORDER AND ACUTE USE OF ALCOHOL 2019

Summary

Research on associations of suicidal behavior, including suicide and suicide attempt, with alcohol use disorder (AUD) and acute use of alcohol (AUA) are discussed, with an emphasis on data from meta-analyses. Based on psychological autopsy investigations, results indicate that AUD is prevalent among individuals who die by suicide. Results also indicate that AUD is a potent risk factor for suicidal behavior. Risk estimates are higher for individuals with AUD in treatment settings, when compared to individuals in the community who have AUD. Also, although rates of suicide and prevalence of AUD remain higher in men, they have increased more among women in recent decades. Based on postmortem blood alcohol concentrations, AUA was commonly present among those who died by suicide. AUA is a potent proximal risk factor for suicidal behavior, and the risk increases with the amount of alcohol consumed, consistent with a dose-response relationship. Research indicates that AUA increases risk for suicidal behavior by lowering inhibition and promoting suicidal thoughts. There is support for policies that serve to reduce alcohol availability in populations with high rates of AUD and suicide, that promote AUD treatment, and that defer suicide risk assessments in intoxicated patients to allow the blood alcohol concentration to decrease.

Source:

Ventura-Cots, M., Ballester-Ferré, M. P., Ravi, S., & Bataller, R. (2019). Public health policies and alcohol-related liver disease. *JHEP Reports*.

Free full text: <https://www.arcr.niaaa.nih.gov/arcr401/article02.htm>

ALCOHOL BINGE-INDUCED CARDIOVASCULAR DYSFUNCTION INVOLVES ENDOCANNABINOID-CB1-R SIGNALING

September 2019

Highlights

- Alcohol is one of the most frequently used intoxicants in the United States. Binge alcohol drinking is a major contributor of emergency department visits.
- Binge alcohol drinking may adversely affect cardiovascular function.

- Here we show that acute alcohol intoxication is associated with elevated levels of cardiac endocannabinoid anandamide and profound cardiovascular dysfunction and blood redistribution lasting for several hours.
- The adverse cardiovascular effects of acute alcohol intoxication are attenuated by CB1-R antagonist or in CB1-R knockout mice.
- A single alcohol binge has profound effect on the cardiovascular system, which involves endocannabinoid-CB1-R signaling.

Summary

Excessive binge alcohol drinking may adversely affect cardiovascular function. In this study we characterize the detailed hemodynamic effects of an acute alcohol binge in mice using multiple approaches and investigate the role of the endocannabinoid–cannabinoid 1 receptor (CB1-R) signaling in these effects. Acute alcohol binge was associated with elevated levels of cardiac endocannabinoid anandamide and profound cardiovascular dysfunction lasting for several hours and redistribution of circulation. These changes were attenuated by CB1-R antagonist or in CB1-R knockout mice. Our results suggest that a single alcohol binge has profound effects on the cardiovascular system, which involve endocannabinoid–CB1-R signaling. The proposed 2018 WCRF/AICR Score is a practical tool for researchers to examine how adherence to the 2018 WCRF/AICR Recommendations relates to cancer risk and mortality in various adult populations.

Source:

Paloczi, J., Matyas, C., Cinar, R., Varga, Z. V., Hasko, G., Schindler, T. H., et al. (2019). Alcohol binge-induced cardiovascular dysfunction involves endocannabinoid–cb1-r signaling. *JACC: Basic to Translational Science*, 4(5), 625-637.

Free full text: <http://basictranslational.onlinejacc.org/content/btr/4/5/625.full.pdf?download=true>