

Pseudo-drunk-patron evaluation of bar-staff compliance with Western Australian liquor law

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Abstract

Compliance of bar staff with the Western Australian liquor law prohibiting service to drunk patrons was assessed through the deployment of actors trained to behave in a drunken manner. The serving practices of 23 licensed premises (19 hotels and four nightclubs) were examined. During 120 visits to hotel and nightclub bars, more than 350 drink orders were placed by pairs of pseudo-drunk actors who ordered up to three drinks each on each visit. On placing these drink orders, pseudo-drunks were refused service by bar staff on only 12 occasions. The rate of refusal of service across all premises was 10 per cent of visits. Partial interventions by servers, such as offering food or low-alcohol or nonalcoholic drinks, occurred in only four instances of the 120 visits. Qualitative observations and results obtained from a separate study examining a subsample of the servers who trained in responsible service of alcohol are discussed.

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