

The impact of later trading hours for hotels (public houses) on breath alcohol levels of apprehended impaired drivers

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Abstract

AIM: To examine the impact of extended trading permits (ETPs) for licensed hotels in Perth, Western Australia on impaired driver breath alcohol levels (BALs) between July 1993 and June 1997. **DESIGN:** Forty-three hotels obtained ETPs allowing later closing hours and 130 maintained standard closing time (controls). Impaired driver BALs were linked to 'last place of drinking' hotels. Before and after period BALs of drivers who last drank at ETP or non-ETP hotels were compared by time of day of apprehension and sex, controlling for age. **FINDINGS:** Impaired female drivers apprehended between 10.01 p.m. and 12 midnight (before closing time) had significantly lower BALs after drinking at ETP hotels. Male drivers aged 18-25 years and apprehended between 12.01 and 2.00 a.m. after drinking at ETP hotels had significantly higher BALs than drivers who drank at non-ETP hotels. **CONCLUSIONS:** At peak times for alcohol-related offences, late trading is associated with higher BALs among those drinkers most at risk of alcohol-related harm.

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