

Use of pseudo-patrons to assess compliance with laws regarding under-age drinking.

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Abstract

The extent to which door and bar staff of licensed premises responded to possibly under-age patrons was assessed through the use of research assistants (young pseudo-patrons) selected for having the appearance of being under 18 years old. A total of 156 visits were made to 13 licensed premises: 1. before delivery of a server training program, 2. immediately after training, and 3. after three months. Staff rarely checked the age and/or identification (ID) of the young pseudo-patrons before or after training. However, a significant interaction was found between the sex of the pseudo-patron and the type of premises. Door staff, who were predominantly at nightclubs, were more likely to check the ID of female pseudo-patrons and hotel bar staff were more likely to check the ID of males. In most cases, however, nonphotographic ID was accepted. While some strategies are suggested, the strongest and most effective measure to prevent under-age drinking will be a more rigorous enforcement of existing liquor laws.

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