

Intoxicated Weekends: Young adults' work hard-play hard lifestyles, public health and public disorder.

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Abstract

Going out at the weekends binge drinking is a leisure priority of the majority of young English adults. This going-out sector is described via a cohort (n = 465) of 22 year olds who have been tracked by the North West Longitudinal Study (1991-2001) since they were 13. This cohort is made up of conventional, educated and employed young people. However, over half are regular heavy drinkers and occasional recreational drug users. They often mix alcohol and illicit drugs on nights out. Their motives for intoxicated weekends relate to maintaining successful work hard-play hard lifestyles. Most nights out are perceived as functional and enjoyable but some go wrong leading to arguments, fights and assaults (the public disorder agenda) and impaired judgement, illness and accidents (the public health agenda). These negative outcomes are probably inevitable given the scale and functions of nights out. Better management of nightlife requires an integrative strategy which recognizes the added value of focusing on the care and welfare of the overall going-out population rather than targeting 'trouble makers' and reacting to ad hoc disorder and mishap. (PsycINFO Database Record (c) 2009 APA, all rights reserved) (from the journal abstract)

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