

Violence prevention in licensed premises.

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Abstract

Licensed premises are associated with a significantly increased risk of aggression and violence. Risk factors for violence in licensed premises include high levels of intoxication, environmental sources of frustration or irritation, socially permissive environments, aggressive patrons, and inexperienced or violent staff. Interventions to reduce alcohol-related violence in licensed premises have included broad-based community interventions, Responsible Beverage Service programmes, local accords or agreements on appropriate industry practices, programs to train staff in techniques for better managing aggression and other problem behaviour, interventions to reduce environmental risks, changes to industry regulations, and targeted policing approaches. Many of these interventions, especially broad-based community interventions, have shown significant reductions in violence. However, rigorous evaluations have been rare, and a wide range of strategies showing promising results are worthy of further study. These include targeted policing strategies, training programs for staff, especially security staff, and multicomponent strategies targeting a range of known risk factors for violence. Bars, nightclubs and pubs fill a special role in modern western society. They provide gathering places for people, especially young adults, to socialize and meet potential romantic partners. However, these are also places that carry a certain amount of risk for violence due to: the increase in aggression associated with alcohol intoxication (Bushman, 1997); social interactions among persons who are all feeling the effects of alcohol (Graham et al., 2000); the nature of some bar-room activities, e.g., slam or mosh dancing (Graham et al., 2000), expectations among some cultures and subcultures that violence is more acceptable in the bar context or while intoxicated (Graham and

Homel, 1997), competitive games such as pool (Graham et al., 1980; Homel and Clark, 1994), and the fact that the locations are frequented by young males who are generally higher risk than other segments of the adult population for aggression (Graham and West, 2001), especially young males drinking in groups (Pernanen, 1991; Homel and Clark, 1994). As noted by Indermaur (1999), the sheer predictability of violence in bars argues for violence prevention interventions targeted at licensed premises. However, the literature on effective interventions to reduce violence in licensed premises is sparse. In this chapter, we first describe the link between alcohol and aggression generally, and the literature on the environmental determinants of alcohol-related aggression in the bar context. We then describe existing interventions to reduce bar violence and review the evidence of their effectiveness. (PsycINFO Database Record (c) 2009 APA, all rights reserved) (from the chapter)

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