

Investigating displacement effects as a result of the Sydney, NSW alcohol lockout legislation

Author(s)

Caitlin Elizabeth Hughes & Alexander Shou Weedon-Newstead

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Abstract

Aims:

On 30 January 2014, in efforts to reduce alcohol-related violence, the New South Wales Parliament adopted alcohol lockout legislation targeting a geographically defined area: the Sydney entertainment precinct. This study used qualitative methods to explore with stakeholders of two areas (Kings Cross/Potts Point and Newtown) whether there was any evidence of displacement of alcohol-related problems from inside to outside the lockout zone.

Methods:

Four focus groups were conducted in mid-2015 with residents and patrons: two in Kings Cross/Potts Point (where the measures were implemented) and two in Newtown (an alternative entertainment precinct exempt from the measures). Each explored experiences pre and post lockouts and any perceived changes in the number of people in the area, level of disorderly conduct, patterns of drug and alcohol consumption, public amenity and public safety.

Findings:

Stakeholders in Kings Cross/Potts Point reported many improvements since the reforms: including reduced patron numbers, less waste and improved public amenity. However, stakeholders from Newtown reported the opposite: increased patron numbers, reduced public amenity and reduced public safety.

Conclusions:

This provides tentative evidence that even if the Sydney lockouts have reduced alcohol-related violence there may have been a partial displacement of alcohol-related problems to outside the lockout zone.

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