

# **Playing it safe: Patron safety strategies and experience of violence in night-time entertainment districts**

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## **Abstract**

### **INTRODUCTION AND AIMS:**

Incidences of violence are elevated in night-time entertainment districts. Research suggests that safety-related behavioural strategies adopted while drinking can reduce negative alcohol-related outcomes. The current study investigates the use of safety strategies and its association with experiences of violence among patrons from the general population.

### **DESIGN AND METHODS:**

Patron interviews (N = 3949) were conducted in and around licenced venues in Newcastle (New South Wales) and Geelong (Victoria) during peak trading hours (Friday and Saturday, 21:00-01:00 h). Participants (mean age = 24.3, SD = 5.8; male 54.4%) were asked to report what measures, if any, they used to keep safe when drinking and whether they had been involved in a violent incident in the last 12 months.

### **RESULTS:**

After controlling for patron demographics and location, the use of multiple (more than one) safety strategies was significantly associated with reduced odds of involvement in a violent incident (odds ratio = 0.64, 95% confidence interval 0.49-0.85, P = 0.002). Significant gender differences were observed in the number and type of safety strategies reported.

### **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS:**

Increasing the number of safety-related behaviours during drinking occasions is associated with a small but significant reduction in experiencing alcohol-related harms, such as violence.

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