

TRENDS IN INJURY ADMISSIONS ASSOCIATED WITH ALCOHOL IN ADOLESCENTS IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA AND ENGLAND: INTENTIONAL AND UNINTENTIONAL CAUSES

Authors:

O'Donnell M¹, Sims S¹, Maclean M¹, Gonzalez-Izquierdo A², Gilbert R³, Stanley F¹.

¹ Telethon Kids Institute, University of WA. ² The Farr Institute of Health Informatics Research, University College London. ³ University College London, Institute of Child Health.

Introduction and Aims: We determined whether trends in hospital admissions for alcohol-related injuries varied between adolescents in Western Australia and in England and identified groups most at risk by comparing trends and rates by age group, gender and whether admissions were recorded as an intentional or unintentional cause.

Design and Methods: Annual incidence rates for alcohol-related injury rates were calculated using hospital admissions data for Western Australia and England. We compared trends in different types of alcohol-related injury by age and gender.

Results: Despite a decrease in the overall rate of injury admissions for 13-17 year olds in Western Australia, alcohol-related injuries have increased significantly from 1980-2009 (from 2 to 12 per 10,000). Conversely, alcohol-related injury rates have declined in England since 2007. In England self-harm is the most frequently recorded cause of alcohol-related injury. In Western Australia, unintentional injury is most common, however violence-related harm is increasing for boys and girls. Boys aged 16-17 in Western Australia had the highest rate of alcohol-related injury (27.1/10,000), which was markedly higher than for 16-17 year old girls in Western Australia (16.6/10,000), girls in England (14.1/10,000), or boys in England (13.2/10,000).

Discussion and Conclusions: Alcohol-related harm of sufficient severity to require hospital admission is increasing among adolescents in Western Australia. Declining trends in England suggests this trend is not inevitable or irreversible. More needs to be done to address alcohol-related harm, and ongoing monitoring is required to assess the effectiveness of strategies.

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