

OFF-SITE ALCOHOL OUTLET DENSITY AND VIOLENCE IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA

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Introduction and Aims: The aim of the study was to investigate the relationship between rates of violence, alcohol sales and numbers of licensed outlets in Western Australia.

Design and Methods: Counts of reported assault offences formed the dependent variable in all analyses. Key independent variables included on-site and off-site licensed outlet counts and alcohol sales. All models included a full accompaniment of potential demographic and socio-economic confounders. Multivariable negative binomial regression models were created at local government area level based on location, type, and time of assault, and age and gender of victim.

Results: Off-site outlet sales and counts of on-site outlets significantly predicted risk of assault in most models. Counts of off-site outlets and on-site outlet sales showed no significant effects in any models.

Discussion and Conclusions: The study has shown that off-site outlet sales and on-site outlet counts, within a region, are important predictors of assault. It is reasonable to conclude that policy decisions which ultimately increase volumes of alcohol sold within communities are more likely to increase rates of violence than decrease them. This warrants recommendation of a precautionary approach to future liquor licensing policy formulation and application in Australia.

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