

CHANGES IN ATTITUDES TO ALCOHOL POLICY IN AUSTRALIA: AN AGE, PERIOD, COHORT ANALYSIS

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Introduction: Through the early 2000s, attitudes towards alcohol policies in Australia became more liberal, while in recent years support for restrictions has grown. This paper will examine how policy attitudes have varied in different birth cohorts and age groups over the period, to provide a better understanding of these attitudinal shifts.

Design and Methods: Data were from 7 waves of the National Drug Strategy Household Survey (1995-2013). Items on support for a series of different alcohol policy options were compiled across these waves. Cross-classified random effects models were used to assess disaggregate the trends in support for restrictive policies into age, period and cohort components.

Results: There were significant period effects, suggesting that the population as a whole became more supportive of restrictive alcohol policies from 2007 onwards. Young adults were the least supportive of restrictive policy options. Controlling for these age effects there was evidence that more recently born cohorts (those born in 1970 onwards) were less supportive of restrictive policies.

Discussions and Conclusions: The recent trend towards stronger support for restrictions has largely been driven by a population-wide shift in support for these policies, while earlier declines in support appear to have been caused by a cohort effect, with Australians born after 1970 significantly less supportive for restrictions.

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