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Reducing Alcohol-related Injury and Harm: The Impact of a Licensed Premises Lockout Policy

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Objective: Alcohol-related incidents remain a considerable burden on policing resources in a number of Australian States and often involve injury and distress. This poster reports on a study designed to determine the impact of a lockout policy on levels of alcohol-related offences in and around licensed premises. The lockout policy prevented patrons from entering or re-entering late night trading licensed premises for a specific period prior to closure i.e., between 3am-5am.

Materials and Methods: The participants in the current study included first response operational police officers from the Gold Coast Police District, Queensland, Australia. During their normal operational shifts, police officers were required to record details of their attendance at all events, including incidents which they believed involved alcohol, illicit drugs and other substances. The same 121 premises were involved in the pre (4 weeks) and post lockout hours data collection process (5 weeks) in 2004.

Results: A total of 3014 alcohol and 9785 non-alcohol related incidents were recorded over the study area, however 478 incidents were recorded in and around 121 licensed premises in the Gold Coast region over the data collection period. Chi-square analyses of the prevalence of incidents before and after implementation of the lockout policy demonstrated that the overall number of alcohol-related incidents requiring police attention was significantly proportionally lower following the introduction of the lockout policy. More specifically, alcohol-related offences that involved general disturbances and sexual offences were significantly reduced after the policy was implemented. However, it is noted that offences that related to property, stealing and assaults experienced a reduced trend, but they did not reach statistical levels of significance. In contrast, traffic offence rates were unchanged.

Conclusion: The findings of the study provide initial supportive evidence regarding the value of lockout initiatives to reduce injury and harm in and around licensed premises. However, in order to clearly demonstrate observed changes in alcohol use and alcohol-related problems that may be associated with the lockout policy for liquor trading hours, further research utilising control-designed longitudinal approaches is necessary.

Table 1. Number of Incidents in and around Licensed Premises before and after Lockout Policy

Policy Change (24hrs)	Incidents	
	In and around Licensed Premises	In areas other than Licensed Premises
Before	175 (4.6%)	3627 (95.4%)
After	303 (3.4%)	8694 (96.6%)

Table 3. The Number of alcohol Related Disturbances Before and After Lockout Policy 3am-6am

Incidents	Alcohol Related		Non-Alcohol Related	
Disturbance/dispute				
Before	135	40.6%	197	59.4%
After ¹	240	34.4%	458	65.6%
Street disturbance				
Before	108	73.0%	40	7%
After ²	105	60.7%	68	39.3%
Sexual Offences				
Before	13	56.5%	10	43.5%
After ³	13	0.8	44	77.2%

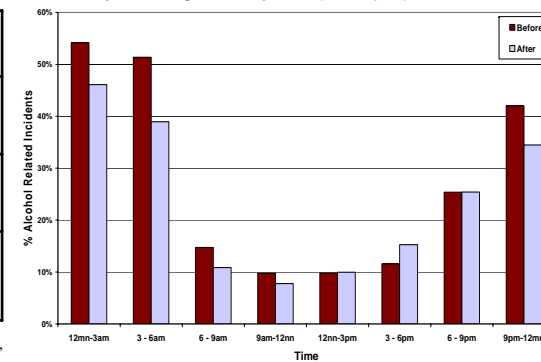
¹ $\chi^2 = 3.83$, $p = 0.05$, odds ratio = 1.3, ² $\chi^2 = 5.4$, $p = 0.02$, odds ratio = 1.75,

³ $\chi^2 = 8.5$, $p = 0.004$, odds ratio = 4.4

Table 2. Total Number of Alcohol and Non-Alcohol Related Incidents Before and After Lockout Policy

Policy Change (24hrs)	Alcohol Related		Non-Alcohol Related	
Before	983	(26.0%)	2819	(74.0%)
After	2031	(23.0%)	6966	(77.0%)
Policy Change (3am -6am)				
Before	149	(51.3%)	141	(49.7%)
After	215	(39%)	337	(61%)

Figure 1. Percentage of Alcohol Related Incidents Before and After the changes to the Liquor Trading hours by Time of Day



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• Palk, G., Davey, J., & Freeman, J. (2007). Policing and preventing alcohol-related violence in and around licensed premises. Paper presented at the 14th International Police Executive Symposium, Dubai, April 8-12.