The effects of changes in the availability of alcohol on consumption, health and social-problems

Presented by

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Michael's academic background is in statistics and criminology. Since 2006, Michael Livingston has worked as a Research Fellow at the Centre for Alcohol Policy Research, based at Turning Point Alcohol and Drug Centre in Melbourne applying a range of quantitative methodologies to alcohol epidemiology and policy analysis. His PhD research, focussing on the impact of liquor licensing liberalisation on alcohol-related harm has been widely published and has been recognised with the Australian Professional Society on Alcohol and Drugs Early Career Researcher Award.

Abstract

Following a long period of relative stability, the liquor licensing regime in Victoria, Australia underwent two decades of dramatic liberalisation from the late 1980s. This liberalisation of policy resulted in a sharp expansion of the number of alcohol outlets in the state. Research in a number of jurisdictions has found that areas with higher densities of alcohol outlets experience higher rates of alcohol-related problems, although few studies have examined this relationship over time. Thus, the aim of my thesis has been to assess what impacts the increases in alcohol outlet numbers in Victoria have had on alcohol consumption and alcohol-related harm, using a range of data sources and quantitative methodologies. Broadly speaking, the findings of this thesis point to significant impacts of the sharp growth of liquor licences in Victoria on a range of negative outcomes. These findings have serious implications for licensing policy both in Australia and internationally, suggesting that liberalised licensing policies bring with them substantial health and social costs.