

Preventing Excessive Alcohol Consumption: Maintaining Limits on Hours of Sale

Task Force Finding

Intervention Definition

One strategy to prevent excessive alcohol consumption and related harms is to limit access by regulating the hours during which alcohol can legally be sold. Approaches may include:

- Maintaining existing limits in response to efforts to expand hours of sale
- Expanding current limits on hours of sale

Policies limiting hours of sale may apply to outlets that sell alcohol for consumption at the place of purchase (on-premises outlets, such as bars or restaurants) or elsewhere (off-premises outlets, such as liquor stores). In the United States, policies may be made at the state level and, where not prohibited, by state pre-emption laws at local levels.

Task Force Finding (February 2009)*

On the basis of sufficient evidence of effectiveness, the Community Preventive Services Task Force recommends maintaining existing limits on the hours during which alcoholic beverages are sold at on-premises outlets as another strategy for preventing alcohol-related harms.

The studies in the review assessed the effectiveness of increasing hours of sale by either 2 or more hours or less than 2 hours in on-premises settings. Studies that examined increasing hours of sale by 2 or more hours found increases in vehicle crash injuries, emergency room admissions, and alcohol-related assault and injury. One study found a decrease in violent crime. Studies that assessed the effectiveness of increasing hours of sale by less than 2 hours showed inconsistent effects, suggesting that changes of less than 2 hours in the sale of alcohol in on-premise settings had no substantial effect on alcohol-related harms.

The Task Force found insufficient evidence to determine the effectiveness of increasing existing limits on hours of sale at off-premises outlets, because no studies were found that assessed such evidence.

*From the following publication:

Task Force on Community Preventive Services. Recommendations on maintaining limits on days and hours of sale of alcoholic beverages to prevent excessive alcohol consumption and related harms. *Am J Prev Med* 2010;39(6):605-6.

Publications

Hahn RA, Kuzara JL, Elder R, Brewer R, Chattopadhyay S, Fielding J, Naimi TS, Toomey T, Middleton JC, Lawrence B, Task Force on Community Preventive Services. Effectiveness of policies restricting hours of alcohol sales in preventing excessive alcohol consumption and related harms. *Am J Prev Med* 2010;39(6):590-604.

Task Force on Community Preventive Services. Recommendations on maintaining limits on days and hours of sale of alcoholic beverages to prevent excessive alcohol consumption and related harms. *Am J Prev Med* 2010;39(6):605-6.

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