Can storytelling about and counting of alcohol's harm to others change national and global policy beyond 2030?

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Introduction and approach:
Qualitative accounts and statistics about harms alcohol can do to others and society have led public health movements and global action. This scoping review seeks to identify how research on 'alcohol's harm to others' (AHTO) has informed national and global strategies and action plans.

Key findings:
The World Health Organization (WHO) 2010 Strategy to Reduce the Harmful Use of Alcohol and the 2022-2030 Global Alcohol Action Plan acknowledge harms from others' drinking, and that it is a global priority to reduce the 'harmful use' of alcohol. In Australia, the social costs of AHTO, and its role in family violence, are highlighted in the National Alcohol (2019-2028) and the National Drug (2017-2026) Strategies. But while money and numbers are mentioned, stories of AHTO are rarely told, and support to those affected is limited. Even where countries, including Australia, have detailed national alcohol strategies, high-level action plans do not focus on ways to reduce or monitor AHTO.

Discussion:
Public health paradigms, drinking cultures, stigma and commercial interests have influenced existing alcohol policy. Contrasting narratives describe healthy, self-regulating and iconic liquor, night-time and sporting economies. Counteracting tales of conviviality, pleasure, fun and freedom compete with stories of drinking-related harms. And while drinking is normalised and promoted, and any alcohol-related problems are attributed by commercial interests to problematic individuals, the alcohol and other drug treatment and research sector is also concerned that individual framings can increase stigma, reduce help-seeking and lessen public support.

Conclusion:
Both the WHO Global Alcohol Action Plan and our National Alcohol Strategy end soon. We argue that new plans for action need to include stories of AHTO.

Implications for policy:
We discuss barriers to national and global action and whose stories and statistics should be included beyond 2030 to drive policy to reduce alcohol-related harm.

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