

aAOD-related road traffic crashes attended by emergency ambulances around public holiday and events.

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Introduction: Driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs is a globally recognised risk factor for road traffic crashes. However, data on the prevalence of alcohol and other drugs (AOD) in non-fatal road crashes are limited, especially around social events where drinking is common. The aim of this study was to examine the relationship between AOD-related ambulance attendances that involved a motor vehicle crash/incident and the timing of public holidays, sporting and other social events.

Method: Alcohol and Drug-related traffic crash data from 2022 were drawn from the National Ambulance Surveillance System. Analysis of daily numbers of presentations associated with major events were undertaken, including leading and lagging effects. Time-series analysis was used to explore trends in AOD-related road traffic crashes in the context of major events, such as the AFL grand final and Melbourne Cup. Analysis controlled for day of the week, month of year to address temporal and seasonal variation.

Results: There were 1657 AOD-related traffic crashes attended by an emergency ambulance in Victoria between 1 January and 31 December 2022. The majority of patients were male (72%) and aged 26-39 years (39%). The majority of ambulance attendances for AOD-related traffic crashes involved alcohol (54%), followed by amphetamines (11%) and cannabis (10%). Specific trends and patterns relating to certain holidays and events will be presented further.

Discussions and Conclusions: This study demonstrates that alcohol and other drugs are involved with traffic-related ambulance attendances, particularly those involving alcohol.

Implications for Practice or Policy: This study indicates a significant number of road traffic crashes, in Victoria, involve alcohol and other drugs. Public health strategies that promote safer transport options and moderate consumption of AOD, may need to be enhanced on public holidays or days of major public events.

Disclosure of Interest Statement: *This study was funded by the Transport Accident Commission (TAC). Prof Lubman is supported by an NHMRC Leadership Fellowship (1196892). Dr Nehme is supported by a fellowship from the National Heart Foundation of Australia.*