

THE QUEENSLAND DRINK SAFE PRECINCT TRIAL

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Introduction:

Alcohol related injuries, crimes, and violence in entertainment precincts are of concern to the government and broader community. In response, the Queensland State Government implemented the Drink Safe Precincts (DSP) Trial (Dec. 2010 to Nov. 2012) in the Brisbane, Gold Coast and Townsville entertainment districts. Strategies included greater police presence; transport options; and increased drug, alcohol, and community support services.

Method:

Weekend emergency department, ambulance dispatch and police offence administrative data for the trial sites were compared with eight matched control sites. Generalised linear modelling was used to analyse trends over the 2-year trial period and the three years prior. Methods controlled for seasonality and events such as Year 12 School leaving celebrations.

Key Findings:

Despite considerable variability across sites, there was some evidence of a reduction in mean and trend of assaults in some trial sites. However, offences such as 'good order' showed some increases, possibly reflecting greater police activity in the trial sites. There was also evidence of possible mirror effects in some control sites.

Discussions and Conclusions:

There is some evidence that the DSP reduced crimes such as assault. However, there may have been an increase in reporting of less serious offences. Methods allowed for flexibility in comparisons and explicit control for events and seasonality. Analysis and conclusions are limited by the constraints of field trials and administrative information.

Implications for Practice or Policy:

Design, implementation, and evaluation of large-scale community initiatives are complex. Despite limitations inherent in administrative data, their volume, cost effectiveness, and standardisation, allows for exploration of population trends.

Implications for Translational Research:

Translation of theory-based interventions for alcohol related crime and injuries face considerable challenges. Field trial evaluations are difficult to design and implement and require a multifaceted approach involving collaboration between researchers, government, service providers, support services, as well as vendors and patrons.

Disclosure of Interest Statement:

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