

## **“We want beer”: A content analysis of online posts written about the alcohol ban during Qatar’s Soccer World Cup**

Erin Santamaria<sup>1</sup>, Benjamin Riordan<sup>1</sup>, Dan Anderson-Luxford<sup>1</sup>, Zhen He<sup>2</sup>, Aiden Nibali<sup>2</sup>, Emmanuel Kuntsche<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Centre for Alcohol Policy Research, La Trobe University, Melbourne, Australia,* <sup>2</sup> *Computer Science and Information Technology, La Trobe University, Melbourne, Australia.*

Presenter’s email: [e.santamaria@latrobe.edu.au](mailto:e.santamaria@latrobe.edu.au)

**Introduction:** The FIFA World Cup is the largest global sporting event with alcohol a significant part of this tournament, as evident from its major sponsor Anheuser-Busch. Indeed, for the 2015 World Cup, Brazil altered policies to allow alcohol in stadiums for the event. Qatar’s successful 2022 World Cup bid sparked discussions about Qatar’s strict regulations on public drinking. Despite assurances for alcohol availability in stadiums, these policies abruptly changed two days before the tournament began. This change ignited discussions about the role of alcohol in sport, particularly online. Thus, we aim to analyse the content of online discourse about the alcohol ban.

**Methods:** We collected all Tweets from a week prior to the tournament to a week after, using key words that referenced the World Cup, alcohol, and the ban. After excluding retweets, 3254 of the 5254 independent posts were coded by stance on the alcohol ban and underlying rationale.

**Results:** Anti-ban tweets dominated (61%), and frequent themes included discontent over its sudden implementation (37%), its perceived contribution to an already troubled World Cup (24%), and its adverse effects on Budweiser’s sponsorship (21%). Pro-ban tweets (17%) highlighted the perceived insignificance of alcohol at sporting events (27%) and the ban’s potential to mitigate hooliganism (18%).

**Discussions and Conclusions:** The study shows a diverse sentiment towards the alcohol ban at the 2022 World Cup. Despite the assertion that alcohol and sport are intertwined, most posts revolved around criticisms of the ban’s implementation and the impacts on the sponsor rather than the act of banning alcohol during sport, and those supporting the ban cited the improved environment.

**Implications for Practice or Policy:** Alcohol in sport remains a key issue, and analysing online conversations on platforms like Twitter, where posts are public, can provide insights into how favourable and acceptable alcohol bans may be.

**Disclosure of Interest Statement:** This work was supported by the La Trobe University SPPH Internal Grant Scheme.