

Quantifying access to 'on-demand' alcohol in New Zealand

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Introduction: On-demand alcohol (delivery under 2-hours) is associated with risky drinking internationally [1,2], but is relatively new to New Zealand. Alcohol outlet density is a determinant of alcohol-related harm [3], and in New Zealand, people living in socio-economically deprived neighbourhoods have greater access to physical alcohol outlets [4]. However, access to on-demand alcohol has not been quantified, and it is unknown whether physical outlet density and access to on-demand alcohol are related. Therefore, we sought to quantify access to on-demand alcohol and test whether access differed by physical outlet density and neighbourhood demographics.

Method: We quantified access to six on-demand alcohol services in Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch. Eighty-one addresses were sampled according to three neighbourhood variables; 1) density of physical alcohol outlet tertile, 2) socioeconomic deprivation tertile, and 3) areas within the top 20th percentile of Māori population (for each city).

Results: The median number of alcohol outlets to purchase from across all on-demand delivery services was five, though this was higher in Christchurch (median=9). There were no significant differences observed between any access measures and neighbourhood socio-economic deprivation or proportion Māori population. However, there were mixed results by city for whether the number of outlets available on-demand was associated with the density of physical outlets.

Discussions and Conclusions: On-demand services are changing alcohol access within New Zealand cities, with on-demand alcohol delivery available in neighbourhoods where physical outlet access is currently low. 'Virtual' access measures need to be considered alongside physical outlet density.

Implications for Practice or Policy: The current New Zealand legislation pre-dates the emergence of on-demand alcohol services, and requires revision to ensure services are appropriately regulated at a national and local level. Local councils need to consider on-demand access as well as physical access when developing Local Alcohol Policies.

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