

Scots and Irish at greater risk of drink-related death, study shows

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Alcohol-related deaths in England and Wales are twice as high among people born in Scotland or Ireland compared with the rest of the population, a study has shown.

Research, conducted by the University of Edinburgh and the Office for National Statistics, also found that men born in India - but living in [England](#) and Wales - had similar rates of alcohol-related death as Scottish- and Irish-born people.

The findings showed too that people born in parts of Asia or Africa were at greater risk of dying from [liver cancer](#), but generally had lower rates of alcohol-related deaths. The higher rate of death from liver cancer could be attributable to the fact that viral [hepatitis](#) is more common in ethnic minority communities.

The team used information on deaths for England and Wales from 1999 to 2003 and figures from the 2001 census to quantify the link between a person's country of birth and the likelihood of dying from an alcohol-related condition.

The difference in alcohol-related [deaths rates](#) could be explained by cultural differences in rates of [alcohol consumption](#). For example, adults who are Scottish or Irish have been shown on average to drink more than the recommended limit of alcohol.

The study, published in the *Journal of Public Health*, follows recent

reports that alcohol-related hospital admissions in the over 65s are rising.

Dr Neeraj Bhala, who led the study, said: "Deaths from alcohol-related conditions, liver disease and liver cancer are increasing in the UK, but little is known about the role of [ethnicity](#) or country of birth. Some ethnic groups appear to be setting an example for the population as a whole with very low rates of liver disease, almost certainly as a result of low alcohol consumption."

"These findings show significant differences in death rates by country of birth for both alcohol-related deaths and liver cancer. We now need to focus on developing new policy, research and practical action to help address these differences."

Alcohol is thought to cause as much death and disability worldwide as tobacco use or high blood pressure. In England alone, alcohol misuse is estimated to cost more than £20 billion a year.

Source: University of Edinburgh

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