

The drink and violence ?gender gap?

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(PhysOrg.com) -- Women and men are at the same risk of violence - until they start drinking, new research from Cardiff University has shown.

The Violence and Society Research Group has shown that the risk of assault increases much faster for men than for [women](#) once they start drinking [alcohol](#).

The Group studied patients arriving for hospital emergency treatment and members of the public out in public places late at night and at weekends. They found the risk of suffering violent injury was the same for men and women when they had drunk no alcohol. The risk rose more rapidly for men than for women when alcohol was consumed. However, the team also found there was an upper limit, of 11 alcohol units in men and five units in women, after which assault injury became less likely.

The study also showed that most assaults were either men attacking men or women attacking women. Incidents involving both sexes were rarer. The team also found that the risk of violence decreased with age, increased with disposable income and that home owners were at lower risk than other groups.

Professor Jonathan Shepherd, Director of the Research Group, said: "In the Christmas party season, these results show once again that people can lower their risk of suffering violence by going easy on alcohol consumption. Men in particular become more at risk, perhaps because of different risk-taking behaviour between the two sexes when drunk.

“The finding that the risk of violence actually falls after a high level of consumption - 11 units in [men](#) and five units in women - may seem a little strange. However, we know that alcohol is ultimately a depressant, and people may become less impulsive and argumentative at these levels.”

The [Violence](#) and Society Research Group has just been awarded a prestigious Queen’s Anniversary Prize for [Higher Education](#), recognising its research work linking [public health](#) and crime prevention. This latest study has been published in *Emergency Medicine Journal*.

Provided by Cardiff University

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