

# People who suppress anger are more likely to become violent when drunk

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A study published today in the journal *Addiction* reveals that drunkenness increases the risk for violent behaviour, but only for individuals with a strong inclination to suppress anger.

The two authors, Thor Norström and Hilde Pape, applied an approach that reduces the risk of drawing erroneous conclusions about cause and effect. They conclude that their study adds to the body of evidence suggesting that drinking may in fact inflict [physical aggression](#). The authors elaborate this conclusion: "Only a tiny fraction of all drinking events involve violence and whether intoxicated aggression is likely to occur seems to depend on the drinkers' propensity to withhold angry feelings when sober."

The study is based on self-reported data from a general population survey of young people in Norway. Nearly 3000 individuals were assessed twice, first at 16-17 years of age and again at ages 21-22. The participants were divided into 3 equally large groups with respect to anger suppression. Among individuals who reported a high inclination to suppress feelings of [anger](#), a 10% increase in drinking to the point of intoxication was associated with a 5% increase in violence. Researchers observed no such association among those who did not habitually suppress their angry feelings.

**More information:** Norström T. and Pape H. Alcohol, suppressed anger and violence. *Addiction* 2010; 105: 10.1111/j.1360-0443.2010.02997.x

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