

Smoking bans in bars help drinkers drink less too, study shows

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(Medical Xpress)—Bans on smoking in bars and restaurants not only reduce tobacco-related illnesses but may also reduce alcohol abuse, a study by Yale School of Medicine researchers shows.

Individuals identified as problem drinkers who live in states that have enacted [smoking bans](#) in public places had a higher rate of remission than problem drinkers living in states without such bans.

"Smokers are three times more likely to abuse alcohol or meet criteria for dependence," said Sherry McKee, associate professor of [psychiatry](#) and senior author of the study published in the journal Drug and Alcohol Dependence. "We wanted to see if separating smoking and drinking changed drinking behavior. It does."

The Yale researchers looked at data from the National Epidemiological Survey on Alcohol and Related Conditions and compared remission rates of individuals with alcohol use disorder (AUD) in states that enacted smoking bans during the study period, compared to states without bans. The study showed that smoking bans influenced rates of AUD among drinkers who drank in public places, like a bar, at least once per month. In states without smoking bans, half of those with an AUD experienced remission. The rate of [remission](#) in states with such bans increased to 61 percent. Currently only 29 states have enacted bans.

States with public drinking bans also had a lower rate of new cases of AUD—seven percent versus 11 percent in states without bans. These changes seemed to be most pronounced with men and young people, as well as [smokers](#).

The results add to evidence of the public health benefits of smoking bans, which have already been shown to reduce tobacco-related illnesses, said Kelly Young-Wolff, the study's lead author.

Provided by Yale University

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