

Teens who participate in sports show lower levels of hazardous drinking

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New research in *Criminal Behavior and Mental Health* aimed to find the relationship between participation in organized sports and an increase in hazardous drinking. Unlike previous research, the study focused on an underrepresented group – young offenders – adolescents who were either excluded from school or involved with the justice system.

93 British male [young offenders](#) from a local Youth Offending Team participated in the study, as well as 53 non-offenders from local schools. Both groups had similarly low socioeconomic status. Participants were asked to partake in a Youth Self Report, a questionnaire that measured behavioral problems and competencies as well as recorded levels of involvement in organized sports.

Fewer offenders participated in an organized sport than non-offenders. Approximately 70 percent of young offenders reported not having participated in any sport or activity. The young offenders group had a significantly higher prevalence of hazardous drinking as compared to non-offenders; this finding contradicts earlier studies that state that participation in [team sports](#) indicates an increase in [hazardous drinking](#). The study also highlighted a decrease in drinking for young offenders who participated in a sport. A possible avenue to decrease drinking would be to ensure that youth offenders have better access to organized sports.

"Many young people benefit from participating in fun, structured activities outside of school. However, more vulnerable youngsters, such

as young offenders, are less likely to participate even though their engagement in team sports could have positive impacts on their health-related behaviours, including the extent that they misuse alcohol. It is important that the most vulnerable in our community are able to access and enjoy sporting activities," author Britt Hallingberg, stated.

More information: Hallingberg, B., Moore, S., Morgan, J., Bowen, K., Vangoozen, S.M.(2014), Adolescent male hazardous drinking and participation in organised activities: Involvement in team sports is associated with less hazardous drinking in young offenders. Criminal Behav. Ment. Health. [DOI: 10.1002/cbm.1912](https://doi.org/10.1002/cbm.1912)

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