

Drinking pushes up liver disease deaths in England

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Binge drinking and 24-hour alcohol shops have helped cause a "shocking" 40-percent jump in deaths from liver disease in England, public health officials said on Monday.

The survey over a 12-year period found that England is now the only European country where fatalities from [liver disease](#) are rising, as drinking has gone down in other parts of Europe.

"These results were far more shocking than I imagine," said Julia Verne, who is head of liver disease at Public Health England, the government agency in charge of healthcare.

"It's clear from looking at the data that the continuous availability of alcohol, and not just [binge drinking](#), is fuelling an increase in deaths from liver disease," she said.

The study found that the preventable disease was now the country's only major cause of death that was still rising, killing 10,948 people in 2012 compared to 7,481 in 2001.

"England is the only country in Europe where the death rate from liver disease is increasing and not falling and that's because our [alcohol consumption](#) is going up and theirs is going down," she said.

The study also found major differences between north and south.

It said 58.4 out of 100,000 male adults had died of liver disease in Blackpool, a seaside town in northwest England, more than four times as many as in Central Bedfordshire in southeast England where 13 per 100,000 died over the 12 years.

Blackpool has one business with an alcohol licence for every 72 adults and almost half the premises have 24-hour permits.

In Central Bedfordshire, there was one licensed outlet per 280 adults and only 10 percent could open round the clock.

Verne said that 37 percent of liver disease deaths were attributable to [excessive drinking](#), highlighting the need for policies like minimum alcohol pricing and advertising limitations to try and curb alcohol consumption.

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