

Tough alcohol policies linked to lower death rates from liver damage

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Findings dovetail with prior research that has shown tighter rules associated with less binge drinking.

(HealthDay)—States with strong alcohol control policies have lower death rates connected to alcohol-related liver damage, a new study finds.

Researchers gave states scores based on their alcohol control policies, such as taxes, retail price restrictions and hours-of-sale limits. The stronger the policies, the higher the score.

A 10-point increase in the score was associated with 9 percent fewer alcoholic cirrhosis deaths among all women, the investigators found. Chronic alcohol abuse can lead to cirrhosis, or scarring of the liver.

When American Indian/Alaska Natives were not included, a 10-point increase in a state's alcohol policy score was associated with 11 percent

fewer deaths in both sexes, and 18 percent fewer alcoholic cirrhosis deaths among women alone, the findings showed.

The strongest link between alcohol policies and [alcoholic cirrhosis](#) death rates was in the northeastern United States, according to study author Dr. Scott Hadland, of Harvard Medical School and Boston Children's Hospital, and colleagues from Boston University School of Health and Georgia State University.

However, the study did not prove a cause-and-effect relationship between stronger alcohol control policies and lower liver-related [death rates](#).

The study was published online Oct. 15 in the journal *Preventing Chronic Disease*.

The results also add to recent research showing that stronger state alcohol control policies are associated with lower rates of binge drinking, the study authors noted in a journal news release.

More information: The American Liver Foundation has more about [alcohol-related liver disease](#).

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