

Researchers study inebriation at sporting events

December 22 2017

In many western countries, public concern about violence and other problems at sporting events has increased. Alcohol is often involved. Research shows that approximately 40 percent of the spectators drink alcohol while attending U.S. baseball and football games, especially when alcohol is served within the arenas themselves. Alcohol-related problems can be compounded at large sport stadiums that hold tens of thousands of spectators. This study examined occurrences of overserving at licensed premises both inside and outside the arenas, and allowing entry of obviously intoxicated spectators into the arenas.

To determine the level of overserving and inappropriate entry, trained professional actors portraying individuals who were "obviously" intoxicated visited licensed premises inside and outside sporting arenas, and attempted to gain entrance to the arenas. The settings were three arenas hosting matches in the Swedish Premier Football League that were held in the largest and second-largest cities in Sweden. The scenarios were developed by an expert panel, and each attempt was monitored by observers who assessed the rate of denied alcohol service and denied entry to the arenas.

Overserving and allowing entry of "obviously" intoxicated spectators were frequent at these sporting events. The rates of denied alcohol service were only 66.9 percent at licensed premises outside the arenas (101 of 151 attempts), and 24.9 percent at premises inside the arenas (59 of 237 attempts). The rate of denied entry to the arenas was only 10.8 percent (11 of 102 attempts). The authors noted that the variation in

server-intervention rates could reflect a lack of training in responsible beverage service among serving staff at licensed premises inside the arenas as well as entrance staff. This lack of training could contribute to unacceptably high intoxication levels among spectators and contribute to increased [alcohol](#)-involved problems within the arenas in Sweden. These findings have implications for [alcohol consumption](#) at [sporting events](#) in other countries as well, including the United States.

More information: Elgán, T. H., Durbeej, N., Holder, H. D. and Gripenberg, J. (2017), Overserving and Allowed Entry of Obviously Alcohol-Intoxicated Spectators at Sporting Events. *Alcohol Clin Exp Res*. DOI: [10.1111/acer.13563](https://doi.org/10.1111/acer.13563)

Provided by Research Society on Alcoholism

Citation: Researchers study inebriation at sporting events (2017, December 22) retrieved 27 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2017-12-inebriation-sporting-events.html>

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