

How much more alcohol are we really drinking?

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Whether it's from boredom, stress or anxiety, the sale of alcohol has reportedly increased by 291 percent during the coronavirus pandemic.

During these unprecedented times, much of the world's population have been asked to self-isolate by remaining indoors. The outcome of the lockdown is unknown but, according to researchers, increased [alcohol](#) use could give rise to a second health crisis.

They have now launched an [anonymous survey](#) to find out how much people's drinking habits might have changed.

Dr. Matt Parker and Dr. Lorenzo Stafford, from the University of Portsmouth, are leading the research.

Dr. Parker said: "The potential public health effects of long-term isolation on alcohol use and misuse are unknown. Alcohol misuse is one of the leading causes of preventable mortality, contributing annually to about three million deaths worldwide.

"This period of isolation might lead to a spike in alcohol misuse and potentially, development of addiction in at-risk individuals or relapse in recovered addicted patients, therefore placing further strain on drug and alcohol services, and the health service in general, during and after the pandemic."

The research team is carrying out an international survey to examine how much, and how often, people are drinking during the crisis, and how drinking habits might change as a result of the lockdown.

In addition to giving a snapshot of individuals' [alcohol consumption](#) before and during lockdown, those who volunteer are being asked to report their alcohol use, stress, and boredom levels weekly to monitor any changes.

Dr. Parker said: "We are seeing across the world reports of higher than average [alcohol use](#). The [global data](#) analytic company Nielson, recently

reported online alcohol sales have increased by a staggering 291 percent increase in the sales of beers, wines and spirits. However, there are no data currently that tell us how much, or how often, people are drinking.

"It is unprecedented to have so many millions of people across the world effectively locked away from their jobs, friends and families. How people cope with this is varied, but there is a lot of anecdotal evidence of people responding by drinking more alcohol worldwide."

Since the team's survey launched, about 350 people have come forward and given a detailed and anonymous account of their [drinking](#) and how it has changed during lockdown.

The researchers hope many more from across the world will take part.

James Clay, a Ph.D. candidate who is administering the survey, said: "In the first week that the survey has been up and running, people have signed up from across the world, including the UK, U.S., Australia and mainland Europe. In time, we hope the results will be of help health providers and governments to prepare for, and potentially mitigate, a second health crisis that could result if many people are consuming more alcohol."

More information: To find out more information about or to take part in the anonymous survey, see [brainandbehaviourlab.jimdofree.../research/alcovid19/](#)

Provided by University of Portsmouth

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