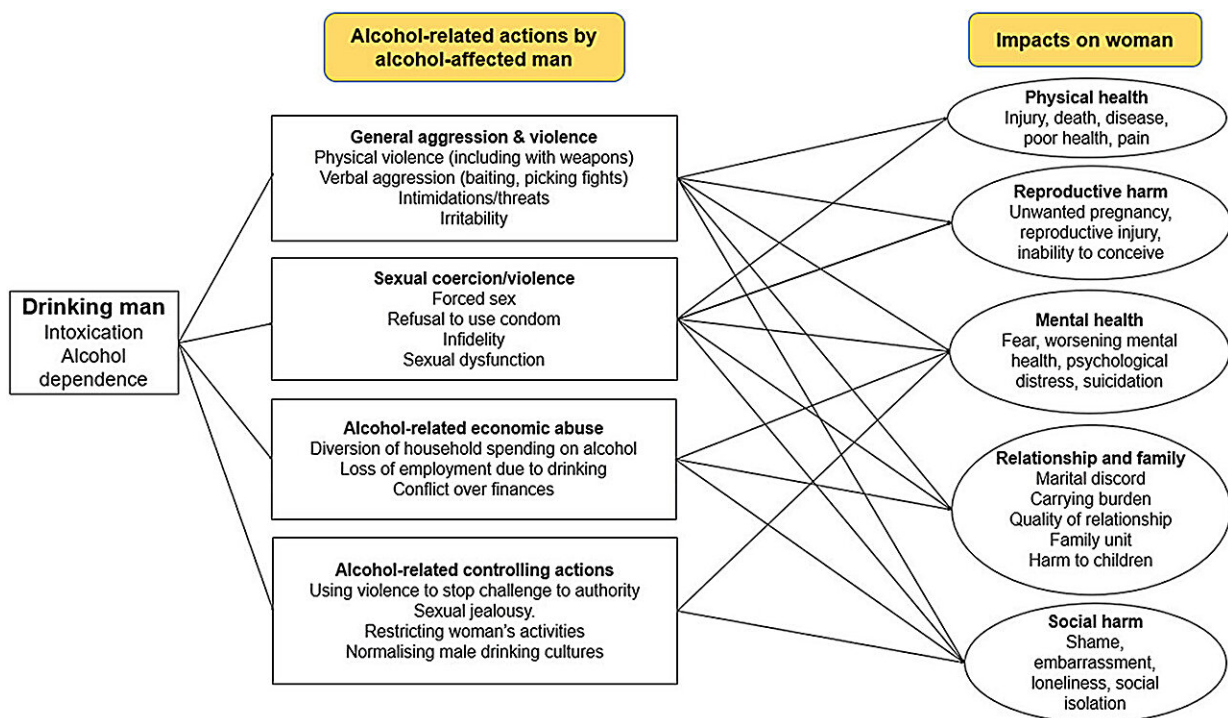


# Researchers urge immediate alcohol regulation to curb violence against women, kids

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Schema of harms arising from men's drinking and impacts on women. Credit: *Global Health Action* (2024). DOI: 10.1080/16549716.2024.2341522

Community organizations and researchers working in violence prevention and alcohol harm reduction are meeting this week to discuss the role of alcohol in violence against women and children and the policy

and program responses needed to address this.

A [review study](#) published this month in *Global Health Action* on the impact on women from men's [alcohol](#) use, led by Dr. Ingrid Wilson, will be the focus of a roundtable discussion hosted by the Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE) in Perth on Wednesday 29 May.

Community organizations and researchers are advocating for changes to alcohol laws to prioritize the prevention of violence against women and children, increased funding for women's services and alcohol and drug services, and targeted perpetrator programs that involve addressing alcohol and other drug use.

The study identified that globally, men's high-risk alcohol use contributes to intimate [partner violence](#), yet interventions that target alcohol-related harms to women are scarce.

Caterina Giorgi, CEO of the Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE), said, "We know that alcohol is a significant contributor to violence, and addressing the role of alcohol is one of the levers that we can use to help keep women and children safe."

She continued, "This is why this week, a range of researchers from across the world and community sector organizations who are working on the ground, are coming together at this moment of crisis. We will talk about what more can be done to help to keep women and children safe and to reduce the impact that alcohol has in increasing this violence."

More than 1 in 3 intimate partner violence incidents in Australia involve alcohol. Almost 1 in 5 (18%) women reported experiencing alcohol-related verbal abuse, 15% reported feeling fearful due to a partner's alcohol use, and 5% reported [physical abuse](#).

In 2021–22, an estimated 348,300 women who experienced [sexual assault](#) by a man in the past ten years believed that alcohol or another substance contributed to their most recent incident of assault.

According to Giorgi, a hurdle to overcome is alcohol companies that continue to hamper policy progress on the commercial drivers of violence.

She said, "There are alcohol lobby groups, large alcohol retailers, and large alcohol companies who do all they can to try and undermine any policy development. There are groups that have actively been trying to stop state and territory governments from updating their laws to include common sense measures to reduce the harm from the delivery of alcohol."

The experts are urging governments to consider the link between alcohol accessibility and violence when developing liquor laws, and to prioritize the safety of women and children.

Lorraine Keane, CEO of Holyoake, a non-profit organization that provides alcohol and other drug, mental health counseling, and [support services](#), said, "A strong and consistent relationship between alcohol use and violence against women has been clearly established in research conducted over the last three decades."

She added, "We are calling on the government to acknowledge the significant impact alcohol has on family violence and to put more of a spotlight on alcohol policy change that fosters harm minimization."

Dr. Ingrid Wilson is an Assistant Professor at the Singapore Institute of Technology and Adjunct Research Fellow at the Judith Lumley Center, La Trobe University. She refers to global alcohol-driven partner violence as "endemic" and mostly hidden.

"Our review of global research shows us that women are affected severely by the physical violence that they experience from an alcohol-affected partner.

But what is less well-known is women's experience of other forms of violence and control from an intimate partner who has been drinking, including economic abuse, reproductive harm and mental ill health. The impacts are devastating and far reaching," Wilson said.

According to the study led by Dr. Wilson, alcohol-related actions by alcohol-affected men include harm to women in the form of:

1. General aggression and violence (e.g., use of weapons, verbal aggression)
2. Sexual coercion/violence (e.g., forced sex, refusal to use a condom)
3. Alcohol-related economic abuse and related behavior (e.g., diversion of household spending on alcohol)
4. Alcohol-related controlling actions (e.g., jealousy, restricting activity)
5. Physical health (e.g., death, STI infection, injury)
6. Reproductive harm (e.g., unwanted pregnancy)
7. Mental ill health (e.g., fear, anxiety)
8. Relationship and family (e.g., harm to children)
9. Social harm (e.g., humiliation, social isolation)

The roundtable will facilitate a discussion among researchers and community organizations regarding the link between alcohol and violence against women and children, as well as the necessary policy and program responses to prevent this violence.

**More information:** Ingrid M. Wilson et al, A global review of the impact on women from men's alcohol drinking: the need for responding with a gendered lens, *Global Health Action* (2024). [DOI: 10.1080/16549716.2024.2341522](https://doi.org/10.1080/16549716.2024.2341522)

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