

Alcohol guidelines, post-incarceration social network dynamics, alcohol's harms to others, drinking and cannabis use in private schools

Editorial

During the business meeting of the 2023 annual meeting of the Kettil Bruun Society (KBS) in Johannesburg, members discussed ways to increase submissions to the International Journal of Alcohol and Drug Research (IJADR) in order to work towards increasing our publication rate and gaining our impact factor. The idea of inviting conference-based papers for submission to IJADR was approved on this basis. In this second issue of IJADR for 2024, we are delighted to publish two of the papers submitted to our regular issue (Davidson et al., 2024; Hopkins et al., 2024) alongside three papers (Karriker-Jaffe et al., 2024; Khanna et al., 2024; Ugland et al., 2024) that arose out of presentations at the 2023 KBS Conference in Johannesburg. Following the conference, the KBS papers were subject to a further round of peer review and editorial consideration prior to publication. We would like to thank the authors for their submissions, and the reviewers involved for their time and helpful feedback.

This issue's five diverse and very interesting papers focus on media coverage of new alcohol guidelines in Canada, alcohol's harms to others in the United States and globally, post-incarceration network dynamics in the United States, drinking and cannabis use among students in private high schools in Australia, and harms to children from men's drinking.

In the article by Ugland and colleagues (2024), media coverage of the proposed 2020 Canadian alcohol guidelines and the implications for public health messaging are documented. The authors used systematic media tracking to identify relevant news articles from Canada, the UK, and the US, and found that more of the original media coverage was positive or negative. Positive articles tended to use a scientific argument to argue that alcohol is more harmful than previously thought, and that people have a 'right to know' about the risks from alcohol. Coverage that was negative emphasised the purported benefits of alcohol and argued that the guidelines exaggerated the risks. Compared to coverage in other countries, this reflects a more positive response to the guidelines, which the authors argue is linked to the approach taken to consultation and the framing of the proposed guidelines. The authors recommend that public health actors adopt a strategic, coordinated approach to knowledge translation and exchange, to counter the predominantly negative response to such guidelines from the

alcohol industry and other commercial entities. *Guest editor: Dr Gemma Mitchell*

Khanna and colleagues used agent-based network modelling to better understand the interconnectedness of tobacco and alcohol use, for people who are involved in the criminal legal system and their social networks in the United States (Khanna et al., 2024). The simulations suggest elevated rates of smoking and heavy drinking in recently released persons, increasing after multiple incarceration events and persisting up to a year after release. Elevated rates were also estimated for their direct social contacts. Focused on a population more likely to experience substance use disorders than the general population, the strength in this paper lies in the agent-based network modelling which includes persons who had been incarcerated and their social networks. In overcoming this methodological challenge, this approach acknowledges the complex interrelationships at work. As the authors mention, there are vast opportunities for their modelling to be expanded as both more data become available and specific policy questions arise. *Guest editors: Inês Henriques-Cadby and Megan Cook*

The article by Karriker-Jaffe and colleagues (2024) presents qualitative data findings from people with lived experience of problems due to someone else's alcohol or drug use. The study also involved adults in caregiving roles (such as parents or guardians) who had children who had experienced harm(s) from another person's substance use. This was done in order to better understand the scope and variation that alcohol and drug use can have in relation to harms to others and therefore inform future survey research. The authors identify some key themes which may serve as new areas of focus and can be utilised in future survey research. These are: the duration of harms across the lifespan and the long-term effects of experiencing someone else's alcohol or drug use; the emotional and psychological impacts – particularly the effect it has on these individuals' relationships; and systems-level harms such as services or social groups that often only exacerbate the harms but without properly acknowledging or addressing them. The authors state that these findings were successfully implemented into the redesign of a survey to better capture the broad range of problems due to someone else's alcohol or drug use in the United States. *Guest editor: Jack G. Martin*

Davidson and colleagues (2024) focus on substance use in the most challenging final year of high school in Australia, namely Year 12. Analysing self-reported alcohol and cannabis use via longitudinal and cohort comparisons in ten independent (private) schools across South-East Queensland, Australia, 1024 Year 12 students in 2020 were compared longitudinally with themselves the year before (in Year 11) and with 632 students in the Year 12 cohort in 2019. They found that longitudinally, Year 12 students of 2020 had higher odds of having six or more drinks per occasion, monthly or more often, and reporting lifetime cannabis use, compared to themselves in 2019 – as might be expected as they reach the legal drinking age in this year. However, they were not more likely to drink alcohol weekly or more often in 2020 versus 2019. However, compared to the 2019 cohort, the 2020 cohort had higher odds of drinking weekly or more often, having six or more drinks per occasion monthly, and reporting lifetime cannabis use. Whether use among the 2020 cohort might be explained by increased age and/or impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic needs further exploration.

Following the tradition of the authors' studies on alcohol's harms to other people, the paper by Hopkins and her colleagues (2024) examines alcohol's harms to children as a result of men's drinking. The paper involves a review of 19 review articles, the large majority of which emanated from high-income countries. The review revealed that studies have mainly focused on men as fathers or primary caregivers, although men's drinking may negatively impact children more broadly. The outcomes of men's drinking were found to be direct and/or indirect and wide-ranging, with their influence being evident in four main areas. The first area involved the family context wherein conflict due to the man's drinking affected children both indirectly and directly. The second theme was family violence and maltreatment, with studies showing that violence and child abuse and neglect were often more likely to be experienced by children in contexts of men's alcohol consumption. The third theme focused on the impacts of men's drinking on children's health and psychological well-being, with studies showing that men's drinking affected children's cognitive and behavioural functioning in many areas. The studies also highlighted resilience factors (such as strong mother-child relationships) that buffered the adverse effects of fathers'/men's alcohol use on children. A fourth main area concerned social and educational outcomes, such as behavioural problems and poorer educational attainment. The review finally highlighted that contextual factors such as socioeconomic status, and patriarchal and gender norms often intersect with men's alcohol use, thereby compounding the effects on children. The authors identified the need for more research to understand the role of men's alcohol consumption on children, which could inform interventions to mitigate the effects of men's drinking on children in society.

We, as guest editors (Rachel O'Donnell, Jack G. Martin, Nic Taylor, Gemma Mitchell, Ines Henriques-Cadby and Megan Cook), have worked hard to publish these KBS conference issue papers with the support of Anne-Marie, Neo and Christine. We are currently working on our IJADR 2024

themed conference issue. The deadline for submission of papers presented at the Fremantle conference is 16th December 2024. If you have a paper you would like to submit online, we encourage you to do so! We look forward to showcasing your work over the next six months, and we very much hope to see you in Glasgow for the [KBS 50th Anniversary Conference!](#)

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