# Alcohol-related harms in Queensland

## Researchers

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## Summary

This study provides an overview of the extent of alcohol-related harms in Queensland using five harm indicators. These indicators are alcohol-related hospitalisations, alcohol-related emergency department presentations, treatment episodes where alcohol was the principal drug of concern, drink driving road fatalities and drink driving hospitalisations. Alcohol related-violence is not addressed in this report because this data is not available for Queensland.

Data on alcohol-related harms was accessed from the relevant Queensland Government Agencies for the most recently available ten year period. However for two of the indicators, alcohol-related emergency department presentations and treatment episodes where alcohol was the principal drug of concern, data was not available for the full time period, so only the available data is reported.

## Outcomes

The study identified an increase in harms for three of the five alcohol harm indicators (hospitalisations, emergency presentations and treatment episodes), and a decrease for the remaining two indicators (drink driving road fatalities and drink driving hospitalisations).

Alcohol-related hospitalisations have increased by 57 per cent between 2002-03 and 2011-12, alcohol-related emergency department presentations have increased by 31 per cent between 2007 and 2012 and treatment episodes where alcohol was the principal drug of concern have increased by 45 per cent between 2005-06 and 2010-11.

When examining changes in harms per 100,000 population, these increases are still observed, with alcohol-related hospitalisations increasing by 29 per cent, emergency department presentations increasing by 18 per cent and treatment episodes where alcohol is the principal drug of concern increasing by 30 per cent.

Conversely, between 2003 and 2012 drink driving fatalities have decreased by 44 per cent and drink driving hospitalisations have decreased by three per cent. It is important to note that this decrease was not linear, with an increase in drink driving fatalities and hospitalisations observed between 2003, and 2007 and 2008 respectively, followed by decreases.

Again, when examining changes in harms per 100,000 population, there was a 52 per cent decrease in drink driving fatalities and 10 per cent decrease in drink driving hospitalisations.

## Recommendations

The collection and reporting of alcohol-related harm data is important to both informing developments in alcohol control policies and evaluating the effectiveness of alcohol control policies. This study demonstrates that the comprehensive approaches taken to reducing alcohol-related road traffic accidents, such the introduction of random breath testing and awareness raising campaigns, have resulted in reductions in harms. However the increases in alcohol-related hospitalisations, emergency presentations and alcohol treatment episodes demonstrate that further alcohol control policies are needed to target these areas of harm.

[view the report](/wp-content/uploads/Final-Alcohol-related-harms-in-Queensland.pdf)