# Estimating the cost of alcohol-related injuries presenting to St Vincent’s emergency department

## Researchers

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## Summary

Consumption of alcohol is a generally accepted part of Australian culture; however, some drinking is associated with considerable harm to the community. Previous studies have concentrated on those admitted to hospital, this study provides data on the costs of those attending Emergency Departments (ED), who are not admitted to hospital.

The study quantifies the proportion of alcohol-related injury cases presenting to a busy inner-city ED, and also aims to present new data on the short-term economic cost associated with these injury cases.

## Outcomes

It was found that one third of injured patients had consumed alcohol, almost two thirds of these on licensed premises. Alcohol was more prevalent among those with violent injuries. One fifth of all injured patients and half of the assault patients had been drinking at high-risk levels.

The research highlights the resources that could be devoted to other illness and disease if the proportion of alcohol-related injuries were reduced. St Vincents ED in this study is just one of 143 EDs in NSW, one of 13 metropolitan major trauma centers.

Alcohol costs the hospital 5,500 staff hours per year - an opportunity cost conservatively estimated at $1.38m in 2005.