# The relationship between income distribution and alcohol-related harm

## Researchers

1. Associate Professor Paul Dietze, Monash Institute of Health Services Research; Turning Point Alcohol and Drug Centre
2. Associate Professor Damien Jolley, Monash Institute of Health Services Research
3. Associate Professor Tanya Chikritzhs, National Drug Research Institute
4. Mr Paul Catalano, National Drug Research Institute
5. Professor Tim Stockwell, Centre for Addictions Research of British Columbia
6. Ms Susan Clemens, Turning Point Alcohol and Drug Centre

## Summary

This project examines the relationship between income disparity and the rates of key alcohol-caused harms at a local-area level in Australia. It has the potential to significantly extend the understanding of geographic patterns in the extent and nature of alcohol-caused harm, and how this relates to social and contextual factors evident at the local level.

The study used hospitalisation data obtained from the National Hospital Morbidity Database, deaths obtained from the ABS Mortality Datafile, and Local Government Area (LGA-level) income and other socio-demographic information obtained from the 2001 census.

Using this data, the project team developed measures of income disparity for all local areas as well as measures of the rates of key alcohol related harms (hospitalisation and death wholly caused by drinking) for local areas, and rates for a number of control conditions such as diverticulitis. The project team examined the relationship between income inequality and the rate of alcohol caused harms at an LGA level, and mapped the relationship between income inequality and the rate of alcohol caused harms in Australian local areas.

## Outcomes

This study found that income inequality was significantly and strongly associated with hospitalisations wholly caused by acute drinking, hospitalisations wholly caused by chronic drinking, and deaths wholly caused by chronic drinking.

In general the results showed that increasing income inequality at the local-area level was associated with increasing rates of alcohol caused harm.

The correct citation for this report is: Dietze, P, Jolley, D, Chikritzhs, T, Catalano, P, Stockwell, T, Clemens, S, 2007 Income inequality and alcohol-related harm in Australia: final report. Unpublished. Melbourne: Monash University.

[view the report](/wp-content/uploads/The-Relationship-Between-Income-Distribution-and-Alcohol-Related-Harm.pdf)