



Alcohol-Attributable Crime In British Columbia

INTRODUCTION

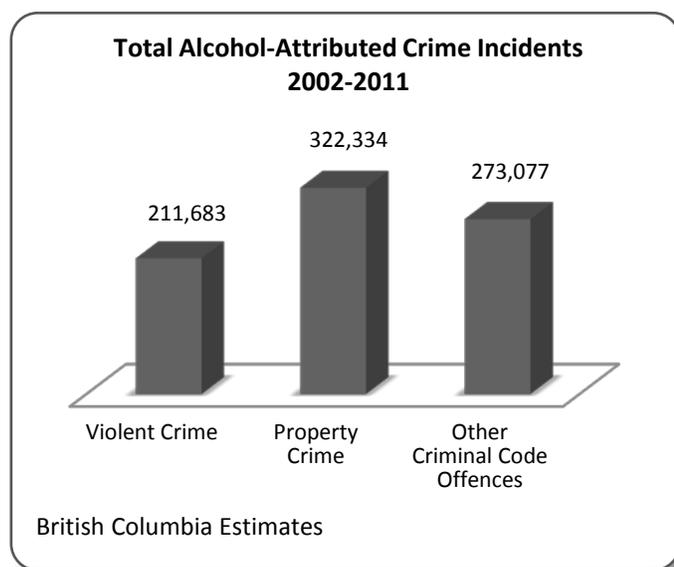
Multiple studies show that increases in alcohol access lead to elevated rates of both violent and amenity crimes.¹⁻³ These offences have high and avoidable trauma and legal related costs for society and its individuals.⁴ As such, understanding the magnitude of offences is an important step toward developing preventative alcohol policy.

METHODS

Estimates of British Columbia's alcohol-attributed crimes were made by applying Pernanen's et. al.⁵ "etiologial fractions" (i.e., the proportions that are likely caused by alcohol). These conservative estimates are made from a survey of Canadian prison inmates. They estimated that approximately 28% of violent crimes, 11% of gainful crimes, and 35% of other criminal code offences were committed under the influence of alcohol. Proportioning BC's police-reported criminal offence data published by the BC Ministry of Justice⁶ and Statistics Canada⁷ respectively, alcohol-related incident counts were established for the years 2002 to 2012.

RESULTS

The results suggest that in 2012 alone, 17,888 violent crimes, 23,954 property crimes, and 26,439 other criminal codes were alcohol-related. Over a decade, between 2002 and 2011, these proportions translated to 211,683 violent crimes, 322,334 property crimes, and 273,077 other criminal code offences. The enormity of the estimates presents a considerable burden of economic costs and victimization for British Columbians. Limiting alcohol access through alcohol minimum pricing, hours of trading, and alcohol outlet densities should be considered viable options for crime prevention.



References:

1. Gruenewald, P. J., & Remer, L. (2006). Changes in outlet densities affect violence rates. *Alcoholism, clinical and experimental research*, 30(7), 1184–93. doi:10.1111/j.1530-0277.2006.00141.x
2. Lipton, R., & Gruenewald, P. (2002). The spatial dynamics of violence and alcohol outlets. *Journal of studies on alcohol*, 63(2), 187–95. Retrieved from <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/12033695>
3. Wilkinson, C., & Livingston, M. (2012). Distances to on- and off-premise alcohol outlets and experiences of alcohol-related amenity problems. *Drug and alcohol review*, 31(4), 394–401. doi:10.1111/j.1465-3362.2011.00346.x
4. Schofield, T. P., & Denson, T. F. (2013). Alcohol Outlet Business Hours and Violent Crime in New York State. *Alcohol and alcoholism (Oxford, Oxfordshire)*, 1–7. doi:10.1093/alcalc/agt003
5. Pernanen, K., Cousineau, M., Brochu, S., & Sun, F. (2002). *Proportions of Crimes Associated with Alcohol and Other Drugs in Canada* (pp. 1–132).
6. <http://www.pssg.gov.bc.ca/policeservices/shareddocs/crime-trends.pdf>
7. http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/85-002_x/2013001/article/11854/tbl/tbl02a-eng.htm