

A Multi-Country Study of Harms to Children Because of Others' Drinking

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ABSTRACT. Objective: This study aims to ascertain and compare the prevalence and correlates of alcohol-related harms to children cross-nationally. **Method:** National and regional sample surveys of randomly selected households included 7,848 carers (4,223 women) from eight countries (Australia, Chile, Ireland, Lao People's Democratic Republic [PDR], Nigeria, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Vietnam). Country response rates ranged from 35% to 99%. Face-to-face or telephone surveys asking about harm from others' drinking to children ages 0–17 years were conducted, including four specific harms: that because of others' drinking in the past year children had been (a) physically hurt, (b) verbally abused, (c) exposed to domestic violence, or (d) left unsupervised. **Results:** The

prevalence of alcohol-related harms to children varied from a low of 4% in Lao PDR to 14% in Vietnam. Alcohol-related harms to children were reported by a substantial minority of families in most countries, with only Lao PDR and Nigeria reporting significantly lower levels of harm. Alcohol-related harms to children were dispersed sociodemographically and were concentrated in families with heavy drinkers. **Conclusions:** Family-level drinking patterns were consistently identified as correlates of harm to children because of others' drinking, whereas sociodemographic factors showed few obvious correlations. (*J. Stud. Alcohol Drugs*, 78, 195–202, 2017)

DESPITE WIDESPREAD ACKNOWLEDGMENT of the protection of children as a key concern (UNICEF, 1989), across the world an estimated 275 million children are victims of violence in their homes (Larraín & Bascuñán,

2009). A substantial literature in high-income countries has found that adult drinking is often implicated in child maltreatment, with proportions attributable to alcohol ranging upward from 16% (Laslett et al., 2013, 2015; Single et al., 2000). Parental and carer alcohol misuse has been linked to a range of negative child outcomes, including poor role modelling and subsequent next-generation problematic drinking (Wilks et al., 1989; Yu, 2003), inability to maintain family routines (Gruenert et al., 2004; Velleman & Templeton, 2007), increased incidence of injuries and childhood diseases (Holmila et al., 2013), and child abuse and neglect (Laslett et al., 2012b, 2013). This article reports on and compares indicators of harm to children from adults' drinking in eight countries: Australia, Ireland, Chile, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Vietnam, Lao People's Democratic Republic (PDR), and Nigeria. These harms include harms to children from the drinking of family members, other relatives, family friends,

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