



## Regulation of Hours of Alcohol Sale

### Background

As the law stands, alcohol outlets in the state of Indiana are allowed to remain open between the hours of 7 a.m. and 3 a.m. (Unless alcohol is being sold at a bar, restaurant, or other properly licensed outlet, sales are not permitted between 3 a.m. on Sunday and 7 a.m. the following Monday.) Current research on the availability of alcohol shows convincing evidence supporting the “availability hypothesis,” which states that the more available alcohol is, the more likely a community is to witness alcohol-related problems, including alcohol-driven violence.<sup>1</sup> Prolonged hours of sale are one method through which alcohol is made more available for purchase. Given this increased availability, it is important to evaluate how modifying permissible hours of sale for alcohol outlets affects rates of negative events—such as assault or drunk driving—within communities.

### Current Research

Several studies conducted in New York by Schofield & Denson seem to suggest correlations between prolonged alcohol outlet business hours and increased rates of both drunk driving and violent crime.<sup>1</sup> Their first study sought to evaluate how small changes in alcohol outlet hours affected rates of violent crimes such as murder, aggravated assault, and rape. While controlling for covariates including age, gender, and racial composition, they performed a series of statistical analyses revealing a distinctly positive correlation between additional weekly alcohol outlet business hours and increased rates of violent crime. They

concluded that the total theoretical financial cost of allowing alcohol outlets to remain open past 1 a.m. was \$194 million dollars in the year 2009 (\$217 million in 2016 dollars).<sup>1</sup> Their second study examined rates of both first-time DWI (“driving while intoxicated”) offenses and repeat DWI offenses as related to prolonged alcohol outlet hours. They found that for every 1 hour increase in weekly outlet availability, 5.78 more first-time DWI offenses were reported per 100,000 people.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, additional weekly available business hours in counties adjacent to offenders’ counties of residence also caused an increase in first-time DWIs reported. However, additional weekly hours of alcohol availability had no effect on number of repeat DWI offenses.<sup>2</sup>

Research abroad also supports Schofield & Denson’s results. In a 2012 study conducted in Norway, two researchers examined data points collected between 2000 and 2010 related to alcohol outlet hour changes and violent assaults within 18 Norwegian city centers. Their statistical analysis revealed that for every 1 hour extension in alcohol outlet business hours, there was a 16% relative increase in total assaults reported.<sup>4</sup> In an earlier study conducted in Diadema, Brazil, even more startling evidence was reported. Prior to July 2002, there were no legal restrictions on alcohol outlet hour availability; many bars remained open for 24 hours a day. Upon the introduction of a law banning alcohol outlet business hours from extending past 11 p.m., researchers set out to investigate the law’s effects on violent crimes, particularly murder. The team performed statistical regression and saw that this



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Vol. 1, No. 12

dramatic change in bar closing hours was correlated with an equally dramatic change in murder rates—rates fell 44% in three years following the law’s establishment.<sup>4</sup> While still in its early stages related to this significant issue, research seems to support the hypothesis that there are links between total alcohol outlet hour availability, violent crime, and first-time DWI offenses.

## Community Resources

If you believe that prolonged alcohol outlet hours might be negatively impacting your community, there are ways to investigate this perceived issue.

- Although Indiana legal code permits alcohol outlets to be open from 7 a.m. to 3 a.m., this does not mean outlets in your area must be open for this entire time. Consider examining the hours of operation of outlets in your community.
- To determine alcohol outlet density in your county, you can visit the Indiana Prevention Resource Center website and click [“County Profiles Data—GIS in Prevention”](#) under “Regional Data.”
- To determine spending on alcohol in your county, you can follow the same steps as above. Then, once you are on the “County Profiles Data” tab, click [“Laws and Norms.”](#)
- For more information on drunk driving in the state of Indiana, visit the CDC’s page [here](#).

- For a general overview of crime statistics in the state of Indiana by county in the year 2010, click [here](#).
- [The Indiana Youth Survey](#) may have additional useful information in determining the impact of alcohol & other substances in your community.

## References

- 1 Denson, T.F., & Schofield, T.P. (2013). Alcohol outlet business hours and Violent Crime in New York State. *Alcohol and Alcoholism*, 48(3) 363-369.
- 2 Denson, T.F., & Schofield, T.P. (2013). Temporal alcohol availability predicts first-time drunk driving, but not repeat offending. *PLOS ONE*, 8(8).
- 3 Rossow, I., & Norstrom, T. (2012). The impact of small changes in bar closing hours on violence. The Norwegian experience from 18 cities. *Addiction*, 107(3) 530-537.
- 4 Duabli, S., Ponicki, W., Grube, J., Pinsky, I., Laranjeira, R., & Raw, M. (2007). The effect of restricting opening hours on alcohol-related violence. *American Journal of Public Health*, 97(12) 2276-2280.