



Measuring BAC as a preventive tool in nightlife

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Introduction

- Getting drunk is a habitual practice in weekend nightlife recreation. Such behaviour is related to risk behaviours, such as violence^{1,2}, risk sexual practices³ or driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs⁴, quite apart from its direct effects on health.
- Prevention in these contexts is a challenge. The majority of initiatives are focused on the harm reduction (HM) for the individual.
- There are fewer interventions aimed directly at the causes, which could involve reducing the supply of alcohol⁵. Prevention addressing the environment or context has been neglected.
- However, HM is not sufficient. For adolescents, the value of having fun is greater than the value of long-term health⁶. Moreover, they tend to see as positive incidents which are assumed to be negative⁷.
- In our study we explore how young people react when they are provided with real information *in situ* on their blood alcohol content. Do they stop drinking or drink less when they find out their level of alcohol?

Methods:

The study was carried out in the most popular nightlife recreational areas in **3 Spanish cities** between 00.00 hrs and 06.00 hrs during the spring of 2011. A total of 1860 young people selected at random were approached, 555 of them (30%) agreeing to participate. After they had answered 22 items on an anonymous questionnaire they were given a breathalyser test and told about the result and its significance in relation to the maximum level permitted for driving (0.05% is the legal limit in Spain). Finally, they were asked four questions about how they expected to behave in the remainder of the night.



Conclusions and discussion

- Knowledge of one's blood alcohol content and its implications has contradictory effects on future behaviour: only 15% said that they would stop drinking for the rest of that night, and 6.6% said they would drink less than usual, whilst 21.5% said they would drink more than they had intended to, and 56.7% said that this knowledge would not affect their behaviour.
- Among those who 'answer positively' there are more women and more people who had already expressed their intention to drink less prior to the breathalyser test.
- Preventive strategies should therefore take into account the positive expectations many drinkers have about getting drunk, since considering only the negative expectations may be insufficient.
- Implementing safety measures in nightlife environments is crucial to protecting public health, yet without reasonable efforts to reduce nightlife alcohol consumption such measures may simply result in safer environments for drunks

RESULTS ★

Table: sample, sociodemographics and alcohol use style

SEX	Man	59.8
	Woman	40.2
AGE GROUP	< 18	6.5
	18-19	23.2
	20-24	42.4
	25 y > 25	27.9
EDUCATION	Basic	21.1
	High school	32.0
	Technical/vocational	9.7
	University	37.1
TIME BEGAN DRINKING	<19h	4.1
	19h-22h	12.7
	22h-24h	37.9
	24h-04h	45.1
WHERE DRINKING TOOK PLACE	Earlier elsewhere	25.90
	Bottle in street	16.80
	At home/restaurant	15.20
BAC	In nightlife venues	61.10
	under 0.3'	30.0
	0.30-0.50	17.3
What do YOU think of the result?	0.50 +	52.5
	Lower than expected	19.3
	As expected	47.3
Now that you know YOUR BAC, what is your intention?	Higher than expected	33.5
	Stop drinking	15.1
	Drink less	6.5
	Drink more	21.5
	Knowing doesn't affect me	56.8

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