

Evidence that the Northern Territory's minimum price targets heavy alcohol consumption.

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Introduction and Aims: The Northern Territory (NT) government introduced a minimum unit price (MUP) of \$1.30 per standard drink (10g pure of alcohol) explicitly aimed at reducing heavy alcohol consumption from October 2018. We aimed to assess the impact the of the NT MUP on drinker's alcohol expenditure.

Method: Participants took part in a 45-item phone survey between July 18 and August 9, 2019. Participants reported how frequently they consumed alcohol, and how much they consumed in a drinking session. Participants reported their preferred brand of alcohol, the cheapest advertised price per standard drink of each brand was collated from the online catalogues of the two biggest alcohol retailers in the NT, before and after MUP introduction. This was used to estimate the average annual alcohol expenditure of each participant. Participants were split by adherence to the National Drinking Guidelines (520 standard drinks annually or no more than 10 SD per week).

Results: Consumers that drank within the guidelines had an average annual alcohol expenditure of \$327.50, this increased by \$3.44 (1.05%) after the implementation of the MUP. Consumers that drank over the guidelines had an annual alcohol expenditure of \$2890 and saw an average increase of \$138.22 (4.78%) after the MUP.

Discussions and Conclusions: The results demonstrate the that the MUP had a more substantial on heavy consumers. This finding should help address community concerns that the MUP unduly targeted non-problematic alcohol consumption.

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