

Social inequalities in harms from others' drinking across the world

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Introduction and aim: Cross-national analyses of drinkers' interpersonal problems from drinking have shown generally higher rates among drinkers at lower socioeconomic levels, at the individual (by education) and national (by national income; Grittner et al., 2012) level. This paper examines patterns of variation by inequality at the two levels for harms from others' drinking.

Design and methods: Combining and comparing survey data from 29 countries (GENAHTO and RARHA [SEAS-1]), harms from known drinkers and from strangers are predicted in multilevel regressions on the respondent's education and the country's per-capita income (purchasing power parity, PPP), with and without other demographic controls.

Results: Harms from known drinkers (partner, family or friends) are generally higher in lower-income countries, though with a few exceptions. The pattern is less clear for harms from strangers' drinking, though the overall correlation of PPP with harm from strangers is positive but modest. At the individual level, higher education (high school completion) is generally associated with fewer harms from known drinkers, and more harms from strangers. Adjusting for other demographics and the respondent's own drinking, the negative association of education with known drinkers' harm is little affected, while the positive association with harm from strangers is weakened.

Conclusions: While harms to drinkers from their own drinking are generally associated with lower socioeconomic status at both country and individual levels, for harms from others' drinking the picture is more complex, as harms from strangers tend to be associated with higher status but harms from known drinkers with lower status.

Implications for Policy: This paper comprises a large body of empirical evidence that informs the alcohol's harm to others paradigm. This paradigm underlines the impact of AHTO as a lever for policy and system change, particularly given alcohol's harm to others affects those who have little control over someone else's behaviour.

Disclosure of Interest Statement: All authors declare no conflicts of interest.