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### ► [Failure to reduce drinking and driving in France: a 6-year prospective study in the GAZEL cohort.](#)

**Constant A., Lafont S., Chiron M. et al.** [Request reprint](#)  
**Addiction: 2010, 105(1), p. 57–61.**

Concludes that the low risk of getting caught and the embeddedness of drinking in the social life of France meant that, despite a big impact on speeding, traffic violation crackdowns did not reduce the prevalence of drink-driving.

**Original abstract** *Aim* An unprecedented decline in alcohol consumption and road mortality has been observed recently in France, but it is still unclear whether or not these changes affected driving while alcohol-intoxicated (DWI). The objective of the study was to estimate prospectively trends of excessive speed on the roads, alcohol consumption and DWI between 2001 and 2007 in a large cohort of experienced drivers.

*Methods* Participants were current employees or recent retirees of the French national electricity and gas company, who volunteered to participate in a research cohort established in 1989 under strict conditions of anonymity. An annual cohort questionnaire is sent to participants that includes two questions about overall alcohol consumption. In 2001 and 2007, 10,684 participants reported their driving behaviours using the same self-administered questionnaire.

*Results* Between 2001 and 2007, the proportion of the 10,684 participants who reported having driven at speeds at least 20 km/hour above the limit decreased from 23.7% to 4.1% in built-up areas ( $P < 0.001$ ), from 34.3% to 9.3% on rural roads ( $P < 0.001$ ) and from 24.3% to 2.7% on highways, all statistically significant differences. Regular and non-regular excessive alcohol consumption decreased from 22.7% to 19.7% and from 18.0% to 14.9%, respectively, whereas DWI increased from 22.9% to 25.3% over the same period, a statistically significant change.

*Conclusions* A recent crackdown on road violations by the French government has failed to deter DWI. Given that DWI seems to be a sporadic and rarely punished behaviour, its

prevention requires more coercive measures, such as using a breath alcohol **ignition interlock** device.

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