

This entry reproduces with minor amendments the original abstract or equivalent of a document collected by Drug and Alcohol Findings. Findings collects any scientific or UK policy document relating to evaluations of drug or alcohol interventions or to the interpretation and use of their findings. Unlike documents selected for fuller analysis, its citation here does not imply that this document is particularly relevant to Britain and of particular merit (though it may well be both) and no attempt has been made to validate the facts or interpretations given by the authors or to offer a critical commentary. The original document was not published by Findings; click on the [Title](#) to obtain copies. Free reprints may also be available from the authors – click [Request reprint](#) to send or adapt the pre-prepared e-mail message. Links to source documents are in [blue](#). Hover mouse over [orange](#) text for explanatory notes.

Click [HERE](#) and enter e-mail address to be alerted to new studies and reviews

---

### ► [Polarized drinking patterns and alcohol deregulation. Trends in alcohol consumption, harms and policy: United Kingdom 1990–2010.](#)

Meier P.S. [Request reprint](#)

**Nordic Studies on Alcohol and Drugs: 2010, 27, p. 383–408.**

Lead researcher on influential analyses of the impact of possible alcohol pricing changes in the UK paints a picture of the state of play in drinking and related harms in England and how far these have or may be affected by national policy initiatives in a European and international policy context.

**Original abstract** This paper sets out to chart key trends in alcohol consumption and harm, and of related policy activity in the UK between 1990 and 2010, assessing among other things the degree to which national policy initiatives have or may in the future affect alcohol-related harm. The focus was on England as the most populous region, with comments on salient differential developments in other regions. The paper draws on a variety of data sources, especially general population surveys, government reports, industry figures, National Statistics products, and recent reviews of data trends. It is structured around the themes:

- trends in volume and patterns of consumption in adults and children;
- trends in major alcohol-related harms;
- changes in the affordability and availability of alcohol;
- influences of major players including policymakers, media and industry; and
- the current (mid-2010) status of policy efforts.

The reviewed data show that the UK has seen significant changes in the patterns and contexts of consumption during the 1990s and 2000s. Major consumption changes include falling per capita consumption, a rise in heavy episodic drinking, increasing preference for higher alcohol content beverages and a polarisation of the distribution of consumption in the population where heavy drinkers consume even higher volumes while moderate drinkers seem to decrease their average intake. Context changes include rising availability and affordability of alcohol, with few alcohol control policy efforts, and a switch from predominantly on-trade to off-trade drinking. Such trends help explain the

current rapid increase in alcohol-related admissions and other heavy end consequences in the context of falling per capita consumption.

Last revised 19 March 2011

► [Comment on this entry](#) ► [Give us your feedback on the site \(one-minute survey\)](#)

---

## Top 10 most closely related documents on this site. For more try a [subject or free text search](#)

[Independent review of the effects of alcohol pricing and promotion](#) STUDY 2008

[The likely impacts of increasing alcohol price: a summary review of the evidence base](#) ABSTRACT 2011

[Alcohol misuse: tackling the UK epidemic](#) REVIEW 2008

[Estimated effect of alcohol pricing policies on health and health economic outcomes in England: an epidemiological model](#) ABSTRACT 2010

[Identifying cost-effective interventions to reduce the burden of harm associated with alcohol misuse in Australia](#) REVIEW 2008

[Economic impacts of alcohol pricing policy options in the UK](#) ABSTRACT 2011

[Reducing alcohol harm: health services in England for alcohol misuse](#) STUDY 2008

[The effectiveness of tax policy interventions for reducing excessive alcohol consumption and related harms](#) REVIEW 2010

[Model-based appraisal of alcohol minimum pricing and off-licensed trade discount bans in Scotland](#) STUDY 2009

[Communities can reduce drink-driving deaths](#) NUGGET 2005