The effects of beverage type on homicide rates in Russia, 1970-2005.

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Abstract
Introduction and Aims. Previous research from Western Europe and North America has
suggested that consuming different types of alcoholic beverage may have differing effects on
homicide rates both within and between countries. The aim of this study was to examine the
relation between the consumption of different beverage types and homicide rates in Russia
across the later-Soviet and post-Soviet periods. Design and Methods. Age-standardised male
and female homicide data for the period 1970-2005 and data on beverage-specific alcohol sales
were obtained from the Russian State Statistical Committee (Rosstat). Time series analysis
(autoregressive integrated moving average modelling) was used to examine the relation
between the sale (consumption) of different alcoholic beverages and homicide rates. Results.
Total alcohol consumption and vodka consumption as measured by sales were significantly
associated with both male and female homicide rates: a 1 L increase in overall alcohol sales
would result in a 5.9% increase in the male homicide rate and a 5.1% increase in the female
homicide rate. The respective figures for vodka were 16.4% and 14.3%. The consumption of
beer and wine was not associated with changes in homicide rates. Discussion and Conclusions.
Our findings suggest that the consumption of distilled spirits has had an especially detrimental
impact on lethal violence in Russia from at least 1970 onwards. In order to reduce homicide
rates in this context, alcohol policy should focus on reducing overall consumption as well as
attempting to shift the beverage preference away from distilled spirits.[Stickley A, Razvodovsky
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