

Increased police patrols may prevent alcohol-impaired driving

Clinical question	How effective are increased police patrols for preventing alcohol-impaired driving?
Bottom line	Most studies found increased police patrols reduced traffic crashes and fatalities. Evidence for the effect on traffic injuries was less consistent. Existing evidence, although supportive, does not firmly establish whether increased police patrols, implemented with or without other intervention elements, reduce the adverse consequences of alcohol-impaired driving.
Caveat	The detail provided on the methodology of included studies was almost uniformly poor. When this information was reported, the methodological quality was often weak. Methodological limitations included inadequate sample size, dissimilar baseline measures, contamination, and inadequate data analysis. Nearly three-quarters of the studies had at least one methodological limitation which could affect their results.
Context	Road traffic injuries cause 1.2 million deaths worldwide each year. Alcohol consumption increases the risk of traffic crashes, especially fatal crashes. Increased police patrols aim to increase both the perceived and actual likelihood of being caught driving while alcohol-impaired, potentially reducing alcohol-related driving, crashes and injuries.
Cochrane Systematic Review	Goss CW et al. Increased police patrols for preventing alcohol-impaired driving. Cochrane Reviews 2008, Issue 4. Article No. CD005242. DOI: 10.1002/14651858.CD005242.pub2. This review contains 32 studies involving 28 million participants.
PEARLS 136, February 2009, written by Brian R McAvoy	

[References]

PEARLS are succinct summaries of Cochrane Systematic Reviews for primary care practitioners. They are funded by the New Zealand Guidelines Group.

PEARLS provide guidance on whether a treatment is effective or ineffective. PEARLS are prepared as an educational resource and do not replace clinician judgement in the management of individual cases.

View PEARLS online at:

- www.cochranepriarycare.org