Preventing Aggression in the Licensed Environment

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Outline

- The context of the problem
- The main factors and processes that lead to violence
- What works?: developing evidence-based preventive practices
- Sustainable regulation
- An experiment to generate new knowledge
Kate Graham is the main international expert: Homel’s perspective (and this presentation) is criminological and regulatory
The Licensed Environment

- The environment inside licensed drinking establishments
- The immediate external environment (entrances and exits, adjoining public space)
- ‘Entertainment precincts’ – Kings Cross, Surfers Paradise, Chapel St Melbourne etc
- Excludes homes – but note growing phenomenon of ‘pre-loading’
The King St kicker says he was just ‘trying to regain my balance.’ But nobody’s buying it

BOOTED OUT

MELBOURNE’S 2am lockout hasn’t started as the sacked bouncer whose brutality shocked Victorians moved to defend himself.

Bar 20 crowd controller Eddie Attal said he could not believe he was the same man portrayed in a confronting series of photos in the Herald Sun.

Mr Attal denied the photos show him assaulting a man outside the King St strip joint.

“It looks like I’m kicking him. I’m trying to regain my balance,” he said.

“I was very devastated and very upset. I’m not that person. I’m a family man with three kids.”

Mr Attal claimed he and another security guard were subjected to severe provocation by three drunken men during seven simmering minutes in front of Bar 20.

He said he was spat on and racially abused by one of the men.

He was fired by Bar 20 and could not be contacted.

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One punch really *can* kill, guard says

*Georgia Waters, BN | July 7, 2008 - 5:01PM*

The Brisbane security guard seriously assaulted at a Fortitude Valley nightclub over the weekend says he didn't really believe that one punch could kill until he was attacked.

Steve Hendry, 22, sustained a fractured skull after being elbowed by a patron at the Empire Hotel on Brunswick Street in the early hours of Sunday morning.

Mr Hendry, a security guard at the nightclub, was trying to break up a fight between a group of patrons, and had been restraining a man who had attacked a smaller man.

He suffered two seizures and was taken to the Royal Brisbane Hospital, where he spent about eight hours on life support and 30 in intensive care.
Societal response

(the GFC ‘in miniature’?)

- Make the individual responsible (e.g. pub bans)
- The deserved misfortune of victims
- Tough enforcement
- Construct the problem solely in terms of alcohol
- Not enough attention to the role of situational factors, venue management, social systems, and industry culture and structures
- A deregulated environment - reviving city or state economies rather than attending to public health outcomes
The Global Context

• Youth framed as a problem: the risk-taking generation

• Concept of ‘rights-based’ citizenship: the new citizen must be a responsible citizen

• Emphasis on constructing oneself, making choices, having one’s own biographical project

• Policies focus on getting young people (and parents) into work: building human capital, meeting the needs of the labour market

• Not much room for young people to make mistakes

• Hold parents responsible - and punish offending young people
Drinking Establishments

- Alcohol - makes people:
  - More focused on the present
  - Less aware of internal thought processes
  - But effects determined by cultural and group expectations
- ‘Time out’ from daily life: licensed venues do not just sell alcohol
- The social functions of public drinking establishments - and the kinds of people who go there - make them a high risk setting for aggression
A greater density of premises = more violence
  - Synergistic or non-linear effects (Livingston et al.)

Licensed premises account for between one third and one half of all assaults
  - Last Drinks surveys

Survey data shows that adults aged 18-30 experience aggression most commonly in bars, clubs etc - more so for serious violence

Employment in drinking establishments also a risk factor
Alcohol and violence

- Aggression occurs when there is a combination of:
  - The pharmacological effects of alcohol
  - A person who is willing to be aggressive when drinking
  - An immediate drinking context conducive to aggression
  - A broader cultural context that is tolerant of alcohol-related aggression
Specific processes

- Risk taking
- Focus on the here and now: hyper-emotional effects
- Cognitive functioning
- Concern with personal power: the ‘macho’ or ‘masculinised’ culture of pubs and clubs
- People are aware of alcohol’s effects on other people *but not on them*
13 empirical studies of the relationship between aggression and aspects of drinking establishments

- More than half Canadian (Graham) or Australian (Homel)
- Mostly observational but some interview studies and one phone survey of young adults
- Mostly quantitative but some qualitative
- Different measures used in different studies
- Produce correlational data - causal processes need experimental confirmation
Patron risk factors

- Young (but depends on study and specific indicator)
- Indigenous or other specific ethnic groups
- ‘Marginal’ patrons
- Salience of some common individual risk factors for criminality (e.g., impulsivity, heavy drinkers)
- Machismo - patrons and staff (esp. security)
Physical environment

- **Line-ups** and people milling around outside
- **Size** of establishment
- **Dirty** premises
- **Crowding**
- **Discomfort** - lack of seating (vertical drinking), smoky air, inconvenient bar access
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NC-1</th>
<th>NC-5</th>
<th>NC-8</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image1.png" alt="Diagram" /></td>
<td><img src="image2.png" alt="Diagram" /></td>
<td><img src="image3.png" alt="Diagram" /></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Entrance &amp; Exit</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Entrance &amp; Exit</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>To &amp; From Bar</strong></td>
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**LOW RISK NIGHTCLUB**

**HIGH RISK NIGHTCLUB**

- NC-1: Exit Only
- NC-5: To & From Bar
- NC-8: To & From Bar
- NC-15: To & From Bar & Toilets
- NC-16: To & From Bar & Dancefloor
- NC-7: To & From Bar
Social environment

- **Permissive environments** in which rules and limits are unclear, especially around dancing and pool playing
- Overall levels of **intoxication**
- **Sexual activity**, sexual competition
- **Illegal activities**, drug dealing, prostitution
Staff

- Proliferation of premises with **specialised and gendered staff roles** - especially **security staff**
- Numbers may be too few or too many
- **Staff skills** (e.g., monitoring and defusing situations)
- Lack of responsible serving
- ‘Bad apples’
- *Enforcer versus guardian role*
The external environment

- Spilling out the doors
- Hot spots
- Geographically isolated venues can be a bigger problem than ‘entertainment areas’
- Not all areas with a high density of venues are a problem
- The symbolic landscape
- Need much more finely grained, small area data to understand the ecology of licensed environments
Governance through partnerships
(“It should be a working together thing”)

- Many forms of partnerships internationally
  - Alcohol Accords
  - Crime and Disorder Partnerships
  - Concierge government
  - Community action coalitions

- Social control:
  - Local and licensing laws
  - Policing strategies: reactive vs problem-solving
  - Crime prevention through environmental design
What works to prevent violence?

- High quality staff training grounded in research: the Ontario Safer Bars Program (encouraging evidence for long-term effects)
- Some forms of police and regulatory enforcement of licensing laws and responsible management practices (long-term effects not demonstrated)
- Community action models (long-term effects only achieved in Sweden)
Safer Bars

- Three-hour training program for all staff and management - reducing and managing problem behaviour and aggression
- A risk assessment workbook for managers
- Legal pamphlet
- Evaluated through a large scale randomized controlled trial: 26 large capacity bars and 12 similar controls
Improvements in knowledge & attitudes by years of experience in the industry
Average number of incidents per observation involving severe aggression by patrons
Policing

- Value of randomised (Jeffs & Saunders) approach not clear
- Best experiment has been in Wellington, New Zealand (randomised plus targeted)
- Combined regulatory approaches may be better - but very limited evidence for the effectiveness of Licensing Accords (partial exception of Cardiff)
- Targeted/Last drinks approach very promising (Wiggers’ research in NSW and the NSW Police Alcohol Linking Program)
The NSW Alcohol Linking Model

- Emphasis on sustainability from the outset
- ‘Research into practice’ team formed
- Critical role of Last Drinks data: established feasibility of long-term police commitment
- Intervention involved:
  - Feedback report to licensees
  - Educational visits by police to offending establishments
  - Follow-up workshop for visited licensees
- 36% reduction in alcohol-related incidents in experimental group vs controls over 3 months (N=400) - but smaller reduction in assaults
Wellington experiment

- Combined regulatory approach
- Heightened police presence in premises at night during 2 6-week periods (30 minute visits)
- Public health & licensing officials made daytime visits - educative/compliance focus
- Also targeted 20 problem premises
Strategies for achieving sustained effects

- Obtaining organizational leadership and policy support…
- Providing supportive organizational infrastructure…
- Developing police knowledge and skills…
- Implementing data quality assurance and performance feedback strategies.
- *Now being adopted across Australia and in New Zealand*
Community Action
Queensland Safety Action Model (1990s)

- **Community forum**/ community-based task groups plus safety audit;
- **Risk assessments** in licensed premises by project personnel, and Code of Practice by nightclub managers;
- **Training** of the community-based project steering committee, the project officer, managers, bar and security staff, and police;
- **Improvements in external regulation** of licensed premises by police and liquor licensing inspectors
Level of regulation: responsive regulation model

- **State**: Formal Regulation and Law Enforcement
- **Local Community**: Informal controls and persuasion
- **Venues**: Self-regulation by licensees
Changes in overall numbers of assaults between 1993 and 1996

No of assaults per 100 hours observation


Surfers Paradise
North Queensland
The Stockholm Prevents Alcohol & Drug Problems (STAD) Project

- Survey (mid-1990s) of owners of licensed premises: owners saw no problems with overserving
- Formation of action group: develop strategies to prevent intoxication and service to minors
  - Two-day training course in RBS for servers, security staff and owners;
  - New forms of enforcement: notification letters, mutual controls (police & licensing officials)
- **Signing of written agreement** by high-ranking officials --> formal steering committee
STAD outcomes

- Interrupted time series analyses of police-recorded violence (inside & outside) between 10 pm and 6 am
- Reduction of 29% in intervention area, slight increase in control area
- Gradual reduction as interventions became more intense
- No displacement or influence of extraneous factors
- Increase in rates of refusal of service to drunks (5% --> 70%)
- Effects sustained over a period of 5 or more years
STAD sustainability

- Strong inter-agency collaborative climate
- with strong leadership from head of licensing
- Lobbying by action group members
- Police gradually came on board strongly
- Institutionalisation through agency financial support, signed agreement
- **10 year time frame**
- Partnership of agencies: “community” only involved through venue employees, leisure industry etc
- Currently being extended to all local government areas in Sweden
Conclusions

- Using a **responsive regulation framework**: 
  - Develop **local partnerships oriented to evidence**
  - Understand the local ecology, industry climate and regulatory systems
  - Incorporate **Safer Bars training/risk assessments** universally
  - **Experiment** with randomised & targeted enforcement using last drinks data
  - **Build sustainability mechanisms in from the outset**
  - **Build community coalitions /action groups suitable to local conditions**
Sustaining a reduction of alcohol-related harms in the licensed environment:

A practical experiment to generate new evidence

Key Centre for Ethics, Law, Justice and Governance
Griffith University, Brisbane, Queensland
February 2009
Why this Project?

- Review of international field revealed very little in the way of long term effectiveness ("Raising the Bar", Graham & Homel, 2008)
- Transition from research into practice poorly done – need rigorous research design that can translate to easily implemented practice:
  - Simple, practical and evidence based
- Unable to sustain reductions in our work in Surfers Paradise and northern Qld
- Consistent indications of others unable to sustain reductions
In Surfers Paradise – ‘return’ to baseline levels of harm

- Reduction of 73% in serious assaults achieved with the Safety Action Project (1996) largely lost by 1999

- In 2007:
  - 66% of ambulance calls
  - 27% of assaults
  - 18% sexual assaults were alcohol related

- The health and injury costs of licensed venues are high
Our challenge........

- Could we develop a comprehensive prevention model that:
  - Was capable of sustaining reductions in harm/violence around licensed premises
  - Could be “fitted” to various jurisdictions
  - Was constantly reviewed
  - Remained evidence-based
  - Could eventually be institutionalised in communities?
Yes we could!

The Model

Framework: Responsive Regulation

1. “Safer Bars” training for all venue staff
2. Community Mobilisation - Informal regulation
3. Policing - targeted using Last Drinks methods based on ambulance, ED & police data
Two Phase Research Project

Phase 1: 12 months (2008/9) to:
- Develop a scientifically defensible research design
- Select and “fit” model at 5 sites in Australia and New Zealand

Phase 2: Trial the model for 7 years at each site
First Phase

- 5 sites selected:
  - Mackay - Queensland
  - Wellington - New Zealand
  - Inner CBD Melbourne - Victoria
  - Chapel Street - Victoria
  - St. Kilda – Victoria

- Research Design finalised

- Expert Group
Expert group

- Mr. Neil Comrie
- Dr. John Wiggers
- Mr. Paul Dillon
- Mr. Michael Lockwood
- Prof Ross Homel
- Prof Paul Mazerolle
Second Phase

- Evaluate impact of model at each of the 5 sites
- Institutionalise model to ensure sustained reductions in alcohol related violence and harm
- 5 - 7 years minimum
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Shape of the Interventions across time periods</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Period 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>TP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>SB</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>CM</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>CM</td>
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</tbody>
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Table 4: The Multi-Parallel design

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sites</th>
<th>Period 1 (2 years retro)</th>
<th>Period 2 (6 months)</th>
<th>Period 3 (6 months)</th>
<th>Period 4 (6 months)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Pre Test</td>
<td>Targeted Policing</td>
<td>Safer Bars</td>
<td>Community Mobilisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1C</td>
<td></td>
<td>No intervention – business as usual</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
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Note: Each component continues at each site after it has been introduced – the components are introduced cumulatively.
What will Griffith Uni do?

- Add value to the resources in communities
- Collect and analyse data provided by sites and feed back reports for each site to:
  - Target policing
  - Develop local strategies
  - Inform service resourcing
  - Informal local and wider policy
- Conduct the larger meta-experiment evaluating all 5 sites
What is so different?

- **Combining** data components (Emergency Dept., Ambulance and Police)
- **Integrating** injury prevention, public health, community safety and crime prevention
- **Balancing** formal, informal (Monitoring Committee) and self regulation (Licensees)
- **Long term** – mechanisms will be integrated into communities as NORMAL practice
Internationalisation

- John Moores Uni – Prof. Mark Bellis:
  - Comparison of KaREN assessment

- Karolinska Institute – Prof. Sven Andreasson
  - PhD student for one year (Mats Halgren)

- Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, Canada - Kate Graham:
  - Comparison of Safer Bars
What is exciting about this research?

- The commitment from all 5 sites is high
- Opportunity to make a difference long term, with international partnerships
- Opportunity to leave permanent practices behind after research project has finished
- Opportunity to make drinking environments safer and less harmful for young people