

# Exploring the influence of community alcohol environments on drinking perceptions, norms and practices: A protocol for a qualitative scoping review

## Authors

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## Abstract

**Introduction:** Evidence from quantitative research and systematic reviews shows that community alcohol environments can influence alcohol-related outcomes. Qualitative evidence can aid in-depth exploration of these associations and provide possible explanations for them.

**Objective:** The objective of this scoping review is to understand the extent and type of qualitative evidence in relation to community alcohol environments, and to provide contextual insights into the influence of alcohol environments on alcohol-related perceptions and behaviours.

**Inclusion criteria:** The review will include qualitative studies, written in English, that report on perceptions and experiences of community alcohol environments. Quantitative studies will be excluded. Studies published in peer-reviewed journals and final study reports will be included. Other forms of grey literature (e.g. theses, opinion pieces) will be excluded.

**Methods:** The proposed scoping review will follow established guidelines. We will search four databases, Google Scholar and reference lists of included studies. Eligibility screening will be conducted independently by two reviewers. A tailored data extraction tool will be used. Included evidence will be brought together in a narrative summary and data from individual sources of evidence will be presented in a table. If relevant and feasible, we will map and summarise key areas of research by using an existing conceptual framework or model.

## Keywords

Alcohol environments; availability; public health; qualitative scoping review

## Introduction

Alcohol use is a major determinant of preventable morbidity and mortality worldwide. Globally, 3 million lives are lost each year to alcohol-related illness (WHO, 2018). The determinants of alcohol use and alcohol-related harm are multi-faceted and complex. Over the past few decades there has been increasing research in the role of local environments in influencing alcohol-related perceptions and behaviours. For example, the Socio-Environmental Context model (Ward, 2010) suggests four environmental dimensions that impact alcohol use: the physical/geographical (e.g. the physical space such as a bar), temporal (e.g. specific times associated with alcohol use such as Friday night), social (i.e. the way social interactions are shaped by the environment), and personal/historical (i.e. the relationship between a person's history and the environment). Similarly, the Socio-Ecological Framework proposes three factors to explain the role of the environment in alcohol use: macrolevel (e.g. alcohol advertising), community (e.g. norms around alcohol use) and the microsystem (e.g. schools, peers) (Sudhinaraset et al., 2016). Availability of alcohol in a given environment (e.g. presence of alcohol outlets) plays a key role in influencing alcohol use and health outcomes. There is quantitative evidence that increased alcohol availability is related to increased alcohol consumption and related harms, including medical harms, injuries, crime, and violence (Campbell et al., 2009; Livingston et al., 2015). This relationship could be explained via three pathways. First, increased availability may increase exposure to alcohol products (i.e. seeing product displays on shop windows or products and promotions inside the shop) (Pastor et al., 2020; Sureda et al., 2018). Second, increased outlet density could increase retailer competition and lead to retailers lowering prices (Tunstall et al., 2018), thus reducing the extent to which cost is a potential barrier to drinking excessively. Higher alcohol outlet density is also associated with higher rates of underage drinking (Chen et al., 2010). Finally, increased availability of alcohol might be linked to perceptions that drinking is common in the neighbourhood and socially endorsed (Kuntsche et al., 2008). Permissive norms around drunkenness have been linked with alcohol use disorder and assault-related hospital admissions (Livingston, 2011).

Restricting alcohol availability has been highlighted as a key area in tackling alcohol-related harm (Alcohol Focus Scotland, 2021; WHO, 2019). Interventions limiting alcohol availability, such as licensed days and hours for alcohol sale, reduced alcohol outlet density, reducing alcohol advertising and promotion, and risk-based licensing, can be effective in reducing alcohol consumption (Campbell et al., 2009; Jackson et al., 2010; Miller et al., 2015).

While most evidence on the relationship between the community alcohol environment and alcohol consumption comes from quantitative studies, as demonstrated in previous systematic reviews (e.g. Gmel et al., 2016; Jernigan et al., 2016; Popova et al., 2009; Sherk et al., 2018; Siegfried & Parry, 2019), fewer studies have focused on understanding how the above pathways operate from a qualitative perspective. Existing qualitative research has explored adolescents' views on alcohol outlet density and outdoor alcohol advertising (Ibitoye et al., 2019), the role of the environment in alcohol recovery (Shortt et al., 2017), characteristics of daytime drinking spaces of the local alcohol environment (Thompson et al., 2018) and public health actors' views on regulations controlling alcohol availability (Fitzgerald et al., 2017, 2018; Kaewpramkusol et al., 2018; Wilkinson et al., 2020). A preliminary search of Web of Science, the Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews and JBI Evidence Synthesis did not find any published literature reviews of qualitative literature looking specifically at community alcohol environments and alcohol perceptions and behaviours.

The objective of this scoping review is to understand the extent and type of qualitative evidence in relation to community alcohol environments, and to provide contextual insights into the influence of alcohol environments on alcohol-related perceptions and behaviours.

The review can aid understanding of the three pathways linking alcohol availability to alcohol consumption and alcohol-related harm (i.e. increased availability, retailer competition, permissive drinking norms) and may suggest new pathways, that have not been considered in quantitative research.

### Review questions

The overarching review aim is to find out what is known from existing qualitative research about the relationship between community alcohol environments and alcohol-related perceptions and behaviours. This will be addressed through three research questions:

1. What aspects of community alcohol environments has previous qualitative research focused on (e.g. availability, permissive drinking norms)?
2. What are the key factors explaining the relationship between community alcohol environments and alcohol-related perceptions and behaviours?
3. What is the knowledge gap in the qualitative evidence base in relation to alcohol environments?

## Eligibility criteria

### Participants

The review will include qualitative studies that report on perceptions and experiences of community alcohol environments (e.g. availability, permissive drinking environments) from the perspectives of the general public, without placing an age limit (i.e. children and young people as well as adults). Studies that explore the views of stakeholders (e.g. public health actors, retailers) will be excluded.

### Concept

The key concept for this review is community alcohol environments. We will adopt a definition of a community, similar to one used by Bryden et al. (2012) in a quantitative systematic review on the influence of community level availability and marketing of alcohol on alcohol use. Communities will be defined as neighbourhoods, villages, towns or residential college campuses. Eligible studies may explore alcohol availability, alcohol affordability, alcohol outlet density, alcohol promotions and advertising, and norms around alcohol use such as drinking in public spaces. Studies exploring individual or family level factors (e.g. demographic characteristics, family history of alcohol use, alcohol availability in the home) or national level factors (e.g. national alcohol policies) will be excluded from the review. Studies that focus on influences of drinking (e.g. social norms, advertising) but do not link these to specific environments will also be excluded.

### Context

The review will include qualitative studies that explore people's perceptions and experiences of community alcohol environments. Only studies in English will be included. No year or country restrictions will be placed.

## Types of Sources

This scoping review will consider qualitative studies including (but not limited to) designs such as phenomenology, grounded theory and ethnography, and observational studies. In addition, qualitative components of mixed-method studies will also be included.

Quantitative studies will be excluded. Studies published in peer-reviewed journals and final study reports will be included. Other forms of grey literature (e.g. theses, conference abstracts, opinion pieces, news articles) will be excluded.

## Methods

The proposed scoping review will follow an existing framework for scoping reviews (Arksey & O'Malley, 2008; Levac et al. 2010) and recent updated guidance from the Joanna Briggs Institute (Peters et al., 2020). The review will be reported as per the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-analyses extension for scoping reviews (PRISMA-ScR) (Tricco et al., 2018).

## Search strategy

The search strategy will aim to identify studies, published in peer-reviewed journals and final study reports. To help us identify relevant search terms in relation to community alcohol environments, an initial search of Web of Science was undertaken. The search was not limited to qualitative evidence, as quantitative research and reviews contain key words related to the topic. The text words contained in the titles and abstracts of relevant articles were used to develop the full search strategy (Appendix 1). The final search strategy will be piloted, refined (if necessary) and adapted for each database. The reference lists of included studies will be screened for additional studies.

The databases to be searched include Medline, CINAHL, Web of Science and PsychINFO. In an effort to identify final study reports, we will search Google Scholar. This may require creating several search strategies containing multiple combinations of the search terms. The first ten pages of each search (representing 100 results) will be reviewed using the title and short text underneath.

## Study/Source of Evidence selection

Following the search, all identified citations will be collated into Zotero and duplicates removed. We will randomly choose thirty titles and abstracts for pilot screening. These will

be screened independently by two reviewers in an effort to pilot the inclusion criteria and make changes, if necessary. Following this pilot test, all other titles and abstracts will be screened by two independent reviewers for assessment against the inclusion criteria for the review. Potentially relevant sources will be retrieved in full and assessed against the inclusion criteria by two independent reviewers. Reasons for exclusion of sources of evidence at full text will be recorded and reported in the scoping review. Any disagreements that arise between the reviewers at each stage of the selection process will be resolved through discussion, or with an additional reviewer. The results of the search and the study inclusion process will be reported in full in the final scoping review and presented in a PRISMA-ScR flow diagram (Tricco et al., 2018).

### Data Extraction

Data will be extracted from papers included in the scoping review by one reviewer and double checked by another, using a data extraction form developed by the reviewers. We will adapt the Joanna Briggs Institute (2020) data extraction template in line with the review questions. Extracted data will include details about study details (e.g. year, author), country, phenomenon of interest/study topic, context/setting, participants, design, methodology, methods and key findings in relation to community alcohol environments (including participant quotes where relevant).

A draft extraction form is provided (see Appendix 2). The draft data extraction form will be modified and revised as necessary during a pilot process of data extraction, based on five evidence sources. Modifications (if any) will be detailed in the scoping review. Any disagreements that arise between the reviewers will be resolved through discussion, or with an additional reviewer. Where required, authors of papers will be contacted to request missing or additional data.

As scoping reviews aim to identify, map, report or discuss the research in a specific field (Arksey & O'Malley, 2008; Peters et al., 2020), critical appraisal of individual sources of evidence will not be conducted.

### Data Analysis and Presentation

Included evidence will be brought together in a narrative summary and data from individual sources of evidence will be presented in a table. If relevant and feasible, we will map and

summarise key areas of research by using an existing conceptual framework or model (e.g. Ward, 2010; Sudhinaraset et al., 2016). However, the feasibility of this and the choice of framework/model will be guided by the identified literature. We may also summarise research, based on population groups (e.g. adults vs children, low income/SES vs high income/SES).

### Funding

This scoping review is part of a larger mixed-methods study, funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), to explore neighbourhood level supply of alcohol and tobacco over time and to improve understanding of the impact of availability on the health and wellbeing of residents.

### Conflicts of interest

There is no conflict of interest in this project.

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## Appendices

### Appendix I: Search strategy (DRAFT)

Community alcohol environment concepts	Sale* OR point of sale OR premise* OR outlet* OR retail* OR store* OR shop* OR supermarket OR off-licence* OR off-license* OR licensed premise* OR licenced premise* OR on-licence* OR off-license* OR drinking space* OR bar OR pub OR club AND
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	neighbo?rhood OR environment* OR built* OR social* OR price OR cost OR densit* OR proximity OR availability OR concentration OR expos* OR closeness OR access* OR afford* OR location OR acceptability
	AND
Qualitative methods	perspective* OR experience* OR perce* OR view* OR explor* OR qualitative OR mixed-method* OR ethnograph* OR observation*
	AND
Alcohol	Alcohol* OR drink* OR booze OR drinking behavi?r OR drinking pattern*

## Appendix II: Data extraction instrument

### COMMUNITY ALCOHOL ENVIRONMENTS SCOPING REVIEW

#### Reviewer name and date

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#### Manuscript details

Author, year, country

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#### Study topic

What is the study about and what does it aim to do?

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**Context**

What is the context (cultural, geographical) and what is the study setting?

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**Design**

How do the authors describe the study design? (if explicitly stated)

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**Methodology**

- What is the methodological label (if any), as stated by the authors?
- What theory does the study use?

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**Method**

- Who is doing this work?
  - How do they sample and recruit participants?
  - How do they ask the questions?
  - What questions do they ask?
  - How do they do the analysis?
- 

**Participants**

Who are the participants?

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**Findings**

- What aspects of community alcohol environments does the findings focus on? (i.e. key themes)
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- How do participants talk about alcohol environments and what do they say? (e.g. summary of findings and participant quotes)

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**Reviewer comments**

Are there specific aspects of the study that need to be considered in the narrative summary?

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