

# RESPONSIBLE ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES SALES AND SERVICES TRAINING INTERVENTION IN CAPE TOWN

HSRC RESEARCH OUTPUT

5219

Karl Peltzer, Shandir Ramlagan, Louis Gliksman  
Human Sciences Research Council, Pretoria, South Africa  
Center for Addiction & Mental Health, Toronto, Canada

## BACKGROUND

The aim of this research is to pilot a responsible beverage service intervention in South Africa. The primary target is the employee sector of licensed establishments, with the objective of changing the set of serving practices among on-premise alcohol licensees within the community, with emphasis on the manager's responsibility. The general operating policy of responsible alcohol service is to create a combination of incentives and disincentives that would strongly encourage on-premise licensees to adopt responsible alcohol serving practices, and stronger policies to intervene in preventing intoxication and keeping intoxicated patrons from driving or road use. In the Western Cape Province in South Africa, legislation was drafted that included responsible alcohol service including server training. In this study, as a pilot, licensed and unlicensed establishments were included.

## METHOD

The sample included 20 shebeens including 10 licensed and 10 unlicensed establishments chosen from a list of alcohol serving establishments in Gugulethu, Cape Town. The study examined whether changes in knowledge, attitudes, and behaviour of servers as well as BAC levels of patrons occurred as a result of receiving server intervention training.

Table 1. Responsible beverage service training curriculum

Server training	Time Required
1. Introduction	20 minutes
2. Alcohol and the Law	110 minutes
3. Facts About Alcohol	60 minutes
4. Preventing Intoxication and Impaired Driving or Road use	75 minutes
5. Managing Intoxication and Impaired Drivers or Road Use	35 minutes
Evaluation of training	5 minutes
Total	5 hours
Owner /Manager Training	
As for Section 1- 5 above	5 hours
6. Policy Development	55 minutes
Evaluation of training	5 minutes
Total	6 hours

Results indicate that the training programme was effective in changing serving practices consistent with the techniques and strategies emphasized in the training. However, the breathalyser results for baseline and follow-up, respectively, in the intervention and control group did not show differences among patrons.

Table 2: Distribution of breathalyser results at pre- and post test

	BAC level	Pre-test (%)	Post test (%)
Experimental (n = 148)	<0.1	54.4	47.9
	0.1-<0.2	37.8	42.7
	>0.2	7.4	9.4
Control (n = 161)	<0.1	52.8	51.3
	0.1-<0.2	39.8	35.0
	>0.2	8.1	13.8
Total n		309	197

## DISCUSSION/RECOMMENDATIONS

While the number of servers who actually participated in the present study was relatively small, the pilot results seem to show that the training programme was effective in changing serving practices. The results from the first phase of the evaluation indicated that information was received and understood. The second phase succeeded in reinforcing or developing attitudes which are consistent with the intention of the programme, they had positive attitudes toward intervening in their patrons' behaviours. The final criterion for success, especially of a training programme, is the use of skills that have been taught and acquired. The findings showed that (trained) servers did change their behaviours consistent with the techniques and strategies emphasized in the training.

The results further suggest that the programme did increase the rate of refusing service to an intoxicated patron. Moreover, there is no evidence that servers can be trained to refuse service solely on the basis of number of drinks served if the patron is not showing overt signs of intoxication. Most servers may be motivated to do no more than the law requires, which in most jurisdictions is simply to refuse service to visibly intoxicated patrons. The breathalyser results for baseline and follow-up, respectively, in the intervention and control group did not show any differences among patrons. So it appears that the responsible beverage service intervention programme may not have had an effect on alcohol levels. It is, however, possible that since one-third of patrons refused to take the breathalyser test that there has been a bias in this assessment.

It is recommended that mandatory server training be introduced in South Africa for licensed establishments and develop an incentive system to encourage voluntary use of server training for unlicensed establishments.

