Abstract

The purposes of this project were to explore the relationship between alcohol bans and 1) age of first use, 2) 30-day use and perceptions of harm among high school students, and 3) intentional and unintentional injury among adolescents. Methods involved secondary data analyses of two samples from the Alaska Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS), the Alaska Trauma Registry (ATR), and the Alaska Violent Death Reporting System (AKVDRS) – including 49 communities without a ban on possession, and including 11 villages with a ban on sales, importation and possession. Lower rates of self-reported alcohol consumption in underage persons in communities with a ban on possession were not found. Moreover, data from the YRBS indicates youth in communities with a ban on alcohol possession had increased odds of lifetime use of alcohol (OR 1.621) as well as use before age of 13 (OR 1.903) and increased odds of lower reported peer approval related to drinking (OR .531). No significant differences were identified between the two communities on 30-day use of alcohol; 30-day binge drinking; drinking on school property; perceptions of risk related to daily use of alcohol; and parental approval for regular alcohol use. Communities with a ban on possession had lower number of suspected or proven alcohol use related injuries and deaths. Study findings suggest that it is insufficient to address alcohol-related problems among youth based on a single environmental level policy. Communities need to look beyond a single factor to solve a public health problem and consider the complex interactions between the individual, interpersonal, and other environmental-level.