

The Role of Alcohol in Homicide: 2015

The Illinois Violent Death Reporting System (IVDRS) is part of the National Violent Death Reporting System, which pools information about the “who, when, where and how” of violent deaths to provide a more complete picture and develop insight into “why” they occur.

This IVDRS Data Brief is an update of a previous analysis (Alcohol in Victims of Homicide, June 2014) and examines how the presence of alcohol varies by demographics, weapon type and circumstances in victims of homicide who were ages 20–54 in Cook, DuPage, Kane, Lake, McHenry and Peoria Counties in 2015. These six counties comprise 79.3% of all homicides which occurred in Illinois during that time (Illinois Department of Public Health). Information about how the data are collected is presented in an earlier data brief (The Illinois Violent Death Reporting System, July 2015).

Homicide victims were significantly more likely to test positive for alcohol if they were Hispanic, if the weapon was a sharp instrument and/or if the homicide occurred on a Saturday or Sunday.

Overall, there were 654 homicides recorded in IVDRS in 2015. Of those, 25.9% tested positive for alcohol in the blood (Figure 1); 11% were not tested for the presence of alcohol. The cases missing toxicology results were tested for differences by sex, age group, race/ethnicity, weapon type and location (Chicago versus non-Chicago). Cases outside of Chicago were less likely to have toxicology reports available; it's possible that cases outside of Chicago are underrepresented. No other differences were found.

STATISTICAL SIGNIFICANCE

Statistical significance is an indicator of the probability that observed findings (in this case differences between years or groups) could have occurred by chance. Statistical significance is often reported as a numerical value 'p' (probability value).

If a p-value is less than 0.05 (5%), we typically say that the observed finding is statistically significant because we are 95% or more certain that the difference observed is not due to chance. If a p-value is greater than 0.05 (5%), we typically say that the finding is not statistically significant because we are less than 95% certain that the difference observed is not due to chance.

Figure 1. Results of alcohol testing in victims of homicide, 2015

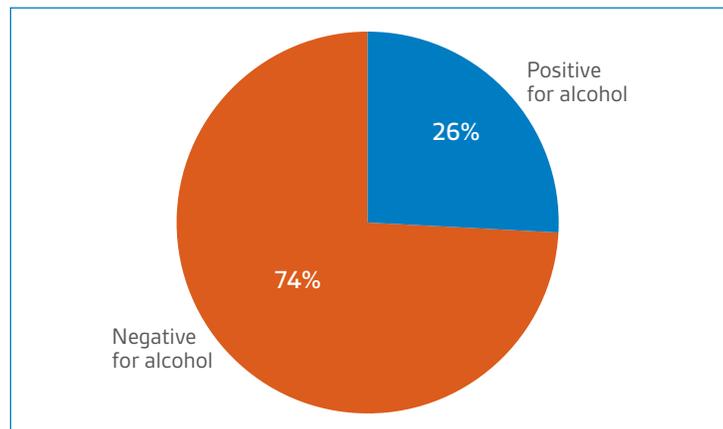
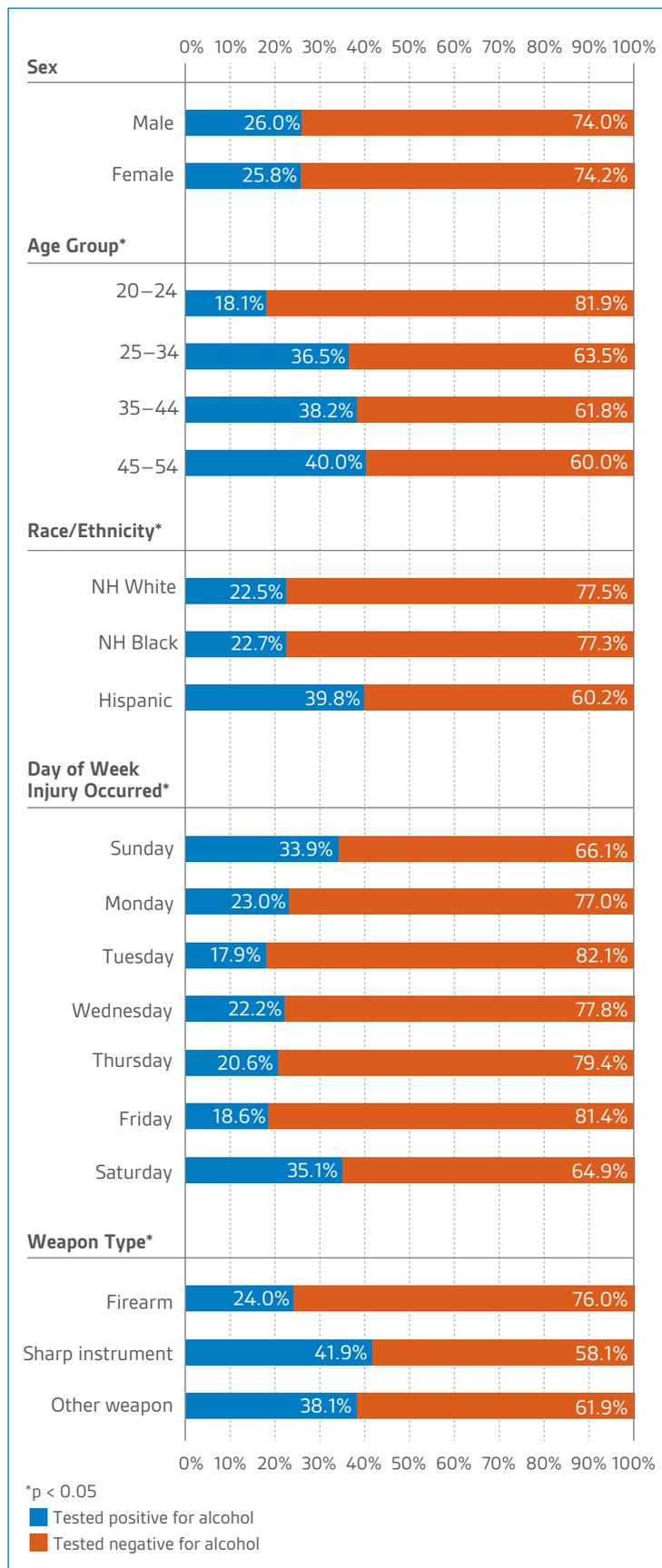


Figure 2 (page 2) presents the percentage of homicide victims who tested positive for alcohol by sex, age group, race/ethnicity, day of week in which the injury leading to death occurred and weapon type. There was no difference in the proportion who tested positive for alcohol between male and female homicide victims. Victims who were 45 to 54 years old were most likely to test positive for alcohol; victims aged 20 to 24 were least likely to test positive for alcohol. Hispanic homicide victims were most likely to test positive for alcohol. Victims who were injured on Saturday and Sunday were most likely to test positive for alcohol; those victims injured on Tuesday or Friday were least likely to test positive for alcohol. Victims who were killed by firearm were less likely than those killed by a sharp instrument or some other weapon to test positive for alcohol. All differences are statistically significant.

Homicide victims were significantly less likely to test positive for alcohol if they were killed by a firearm and/or if the homicide occurred on a Tuesday or Friday.

The type of location where the injury occurred (i.e., a house/apartment, street/sidewalk/alley, motor vehicle, etc.), whether or not the injury occurred during an argument, whether or not the victim was a gang member or suspected gang member and educational level of the victim had no bearing on alcohol being present or not in the victim (results not shown).

Figure 2. Results of alcohol testing in victims of homicide by sex, age group, race/ethnicity, day of week and weapon type.



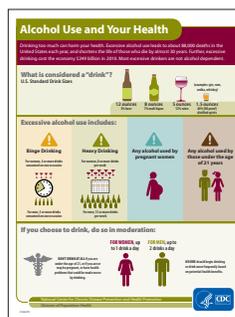
RESOURCES



Alcohol and Violent Crime: What Is the Connection? What Can Be Done?

Bureau of Justice Assistance
 Office of Justice Programs
 U.S. Department of Justice

www.nllea.org/documents/Alcohol_and_Crime.pdf



Fact Sheets – Alcohol Use and Your Health

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

www.cdc.gov/alcohol/fact-sheets/alcohol-use.htm

CONTACT INFORMATION

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