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Alcohol Risk Management
in Cumberland and Perry Counties

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**Background Information**

**TIPS/RAMP**

Assessing the program’s impact on bar servers’ actual serving behaviors, researchers determined that individuals who received TIPS training were significantly less likely to serve patrons to the point of becoming intoxicated (Geller, Russ & Delphos, 1987). Interestingly, the amount of tip money the servers made was unaffected by the training.

A study by the Addiction Research Foundation in Canada found that a group of bar servers who did receive an intervention scored far better compared to a control group on knowledge tests of identifying and refusing over-intoxicated patrons (Gliksman et al, 1993). The servers demonstrated increased knowledge about the short-term effects of alcohol, their legal obligations as the party serving alcohol to customers, and the criteria defining ‘appropriate’ or ‘inappropriate’ practices for serving alcohol (Gliksman et al., 1993).

**Fake Identification**

One study found that in a sample of 1,098 college students, less than one third (exactly 29.1%) of the sample had been caught using fake IDS (Nguyen, Walters, Rinker, Wyatt & DeJong, 2011). If servers do not correctly verify the age of patrons, bars and restaurants are at risk of a host of legal consequences.

**Driving Under the Influence**

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) in 2010 alone, more than 10,000 people died in alcohol-impaired driving crashes – one every 51 minutes. It is estimated that alcohol-impaired driving crashes cost more than $37 billion annually. In April 2010, 870 people died in crashes in which the drivers had blood alcohol concentrations of .08 or higher.

Drunk driving is a crime that is 100% preventable and there are many precautions that licensed establishments and communities can take to reduce risky drinking behavior. For example, requiring servers and bartenders to receive formal training in risk reduction programs that teach employees to adopt responsible serving practices and also teach bar owners and managers to adopt responsible business practices and policies (Center for Problem-Oriented Policing, 2012).

**Fetal Alcohol Syndrome**

Fetal Alcohol Syndrome is a birth defect condition that affects the newborns of mothers who consumed alcohol during their pregnancy. If a mother has consumed enough alcohol, the child is born with mental and physical disabilities. One case study described children with F.A.S. as having a "starved, shriveled and imperfect look" (Jones & Streissguth, 2010). Pregnant women are legally entitled to drink as much as they please, protected by their civil rights as citizens. Bar servers, moreover, can be penalized legally for refusing to serve a pregnant woman alcohol on the grounds that this would count as legal discrimination. Thus the burden is placed on the mother to monitor her drinking. Research has found that mothers of children with F.A.S. were more likely to have ingested marijuana or cocaine during
pregnancy and to have drunk heavily (7 days/week) during pregnancy (Cannon, Dominique, O’Leary, Sniezek & Floyd, 2012).

Purpose
The current investigation was done as part of the Cumberland Perry Drug and Alcohol Commission’s 2012 local needs assessment. Research has shown that effective alcohol policies targeting bars and restaurants can decrease risky drinking behavior and its consequences such as drunk driving (U.S. Department of Transportation). Accordingly, the Cumberland Perry Drug and Alcohol Commission requested information about the practices related to the promotion and sale of alcohol beverages in bars and restaurants in Cumberland and Perry Counties. This information will be used to develop interventions to decrease risky drinking in these communities.

Methods

Dickinson College students in Professor Sharon Kingston’s Advanced Seminar in Community Psychology conducted telephone surveys of bar and restaurant managers in Cumberland and Perry Counties. Twenty Perry County establishments were contacted, and 7 surveys were successfully completed. In Cumberland County, 80 bars and restaurants are licensed to serve alcohol. Forty Cumberland County establishments were selected to be contacted. Establishments were ranked as having high or low by numbers of alcohol server violations and by location across Cumberland County. Establishments within these categories were chosen at random to yield a proportionate number of establishments with high and low alcohol server violations that spanned the geographic area of Cumberland County. Of the 40 establishments, 18 surveys were successfully completed.

The research team attempted to reach businesses during convenient hours to conduct the surveys with bar and restaurant owners and managers. Each interview lasted roughly 10 minutes. The survey questions focused primarily on the alcohol server training of employees, procedures for identifying intoxicated or underage patrons, refusal of services to intoxicated patrons, and whether the establishment sponsors promotions that encourage risky drinking.
Results

Types of Establishments

- Hotel/Hospitality
- Club
- Sports Bar
- Neighborhood Pub
- Restaurant and Bar
- Brew Pub
- Restaurant

Server Training and Experience

- 20 of our 24 respondents reported that their servers are formally trained, 18 of them specifically listed RAMP as their training program. All of the participants reported that they conduct in-house training.
- The most commonly taught skills during in-house training were signs of intoxication, checking IDs, house rules and procedures, training shifts or “follows,” laws and policies, and conflict resolution.
- 12 of the 26 bars require previous server experience.
- All establishments expressed that having a team of responsible, trained alcohol servers was very important to them.
- Establishments who require their servers to be formally trained are more likely to have a greater number of alcohol server violations. The higher rates of formal alcohol server training could reflect an effort by owners of these establishments to curb the number of violations.
- 18 of 25 participants were aware of benefits to their establishment of having formally trained servers. All who responded listed the following benefits as either somewhat important or very important.
  - Reduction of legal penalties issued for serving a minor or visibly intoxicated patron
  - Liquor liability insurance discount
  - Recognition as a responsible licensee in the community
Alcohol Promotions

- The number of drink specials offered by the establishment is positively correlated with the number of alcohol violations.
  - For example, establishments who offer happy hours, beer specials, and signature cocktails are likely to have more violations than establishments who offer only happy hour, or happy hour and beer specials.
- Only 4 of 24 respondents ever charge entrance fees, and they had between 1 and 10 violations. Typically, entrance fees are charged for events.
Alcohol Risk Management

- The presence of signs (refusing sales to minors, DUI, and the dangers of drinking while pregnant) is correlated with higher numbers of alcohol violations.
- Establishments may post signs in reaction to their alcohol server violation status, or the type of establishments (bars, clubs) who are more likely to post signs may be more likely to incur violations than establishments that are less likely to post signs (restaurants).
- 9 of our participants employ security staff to handle rowdy customers.
- Establishments who use both managers and security support to eject patrons have significantly fewer violations than places that use other means of ejection (manager alone, security alone, etc.)

Drunk Driving Prevention

- The majority of establishments offer free non-alcoholic drinks for designated drivers. Some other benefits offered include:
  - Free food/appetizers
  - Gas money
  - No entrance fee
- In an effort to prevent someone driving while intoxicated, some of our respondents report:
  - Offering more food or water to delay departure
  - Taking their keys
  - Offering to call a cab, or pay for a cab
  - Personally taking them home, or finding them a ride
  - Offering discounted or free rooms at their hotel
  - Calling police if necessary

Fetal Alcohol Syndrome

- When asked if they would be willing to post signs warning about the dangers of fetal alcohol syndrome (FAS):
  - 9 would be willing
  - 5 are unwilling
  - 10 were undecided
- The most common responses to this question were:
  - Would need approval from the owner or manager
  - Fear of legal complications of refusing to serve a pregnant woman
  - They hadn't thought of it before
  - If the signs were mandatory, they would post them
Limitations

One of the limitations that the research team encountered was that all responses were self-reported by bar and restaurant managers. None of the data were actual observations of how procedures are carried out by staff members. In addition, the survey only assessed if the business conducted formal training with their servers, not the actual percentage of servers who have received formal training. This information could have been useful to determine the number servers in the area who still lack formal training.

Another area of limitation involved our method of data collection. Our sample was not a large as we had anticipated, due to lack of response to the telephone surveys. The distribution of our sample may not be representative of the number of alcohol server violations in Cumberland and Perry Counties.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of our research, several recommendations can be made for the Cumberland Perry Drug and Alcohol Commission to improve the safety and welfare of the community. First, the Commission better educate bar and restaurant owners about the benefits of having formally trained servers. Not all of the managers we interviewed were aware of these benefits, and those who responded listed the benefits as somewhat or very important to their establishment. In particular, all respondents expressed that having a team of responsible, trained alcohol servers was very important to them. RAMP could be marketed by highlighting this benefit.

In addition, the commission should distribute signs warning about the dangers of fetal alcohol syndrome. Many of the respondents were interested in posting signs in their establishment. Others had concerns about the legality of such signs. If the Commission were to address the legal concerns of owners and managers, they may be more likely to accept the signs.

The number of drink promotions was correlated with the number of alcohol server violations. If the Commission were to address the number of drink promotions that establishments offer, alcohol server violations may decrease over time.