

***‘Less Pints, More Points’***

***A cluster randomised trial to evaluate a setting-based alcohol and nutrition intervention programme in the GAA***

**Introduction**
The link between alcohol and sport is pervasive but there is a dearth of information on alcohol use among amateur sporting organisations both in Ireland and internationally. A study was conducted to assess alcohol use and nutrition patterns in amateur sportsmen and to evaluate an alcohol and nutrition intervention programme.
**Aims and Objectives**
The aim of the programme was to reduce alcohol related harms and to improve diet among GAA players.
**Methods**
The study was carried out in two counties in the Republic of Ireland.  All the clubs from one county (N=29) and a 20% random sample (12/60) in another county were selected as control and intervention counties, respectively.  All players aged 16 years and over were eligible.  Data on alcohol use and nutrition were collected by self-administered questionnaires before and after the intervention programme.  The intervention was provided to the players and club managers and coaches in the 12 intervention counties.  The intervention included: (1) alcohol and nutrition education for the players, (2) alcohol policy training for the club managers/coaches and (3) an alcohol media campaign.
**Results**
Data were collected on 960 players at baseline and 659 players at follow-up. The study found that the majority of players were drinkers and a significant number of these engaged in high risk drinking patterns. Players reported experiencing harm due to their drinking and this was associated with their drinking pattern. The intervention did not have a significant impact on the players’ drinking or diet. However, club coaches and managers were positive about the programme.
**Conclusion**
Participation in sport is health promoting. However the health benefits may be offset if the alcohol culture in sporting organisations does not change. Research on alcohol use in other sporting organisations is needed. Effective alcohol policies at national, county and club level are required from sporting organisations, including the GAA.

Study team
TCD: Shane Allwright, Anne O’Farrell
HSE: Susan Kenny, Gerry Roddy, Nazih Eldin