



Public Health
England

Protecting and improving the nation's health

Working Years of Life Lost due to Alcohol

Ad hoc statistical release

About Public Health England

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Key findings

- in 2015 there were an estimated 167,000 working years lost due to alcohol in England
- alcohol-attributable conditions were responsible for 16% of all working years lost in 2015
- premature deaths from liver disease as a result of alcohol consumption led to 50,000 working years of life lost in 2015
- more working years were lost to alcohol than the ten leading causes of cancer death combined

Summary

Alcohol-related deaths often occur at relatively young ages. One of the ways to consider the full impact of alcohol on both the individual and wider society is to look at how many working years are lost each year due to premature death as a result of alcohol.

Mortality data for 2015 from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) has been used to calculate the potential working years of life lost for individuals who died before the age of 65 years. The methodology used is in line with figures produced by the ONS on working years of life lost (1).

In 2015 there were an estimated 1 million working years of life lost in England and 16% of these (167,000 years) can be attributed to alcohol consumption. Table 1 below shows the causes of death that led to the greatest number of working years lost and the alcohol-attributable element for each cause, where relevant. This data is also displayed in Figure 1.

Table 1: Working years of life lost by underlying cause of death, England 2015

ICD code	Cause of death	Working years of life lost due to alcohol	All working years of life lost
X60-X84	Intentional self-harm	22,483	70,321
I20-I25	Ischaemic heart disease	0	70,032
K70-K77	Liver disease	49,908	59,510
X40-X49	Accidental poisoning	17,989	51,603
C33-C34	Cancer of the lung, trachea and bronchus	0	37,349
C50	Breast cancer	5,117	35,217
V01-V89	Transport accidents	9,721	29,312
I60-I69	Cerebrovascular disease	4,388	26,178
C18-C21	Cancer of the colon, rectum and anus	4,056	24,714
J09-J18	Pneumonia and flu	2,152	21,914

Figure 1: Working years of life lost by underlying cause of death, England 2015

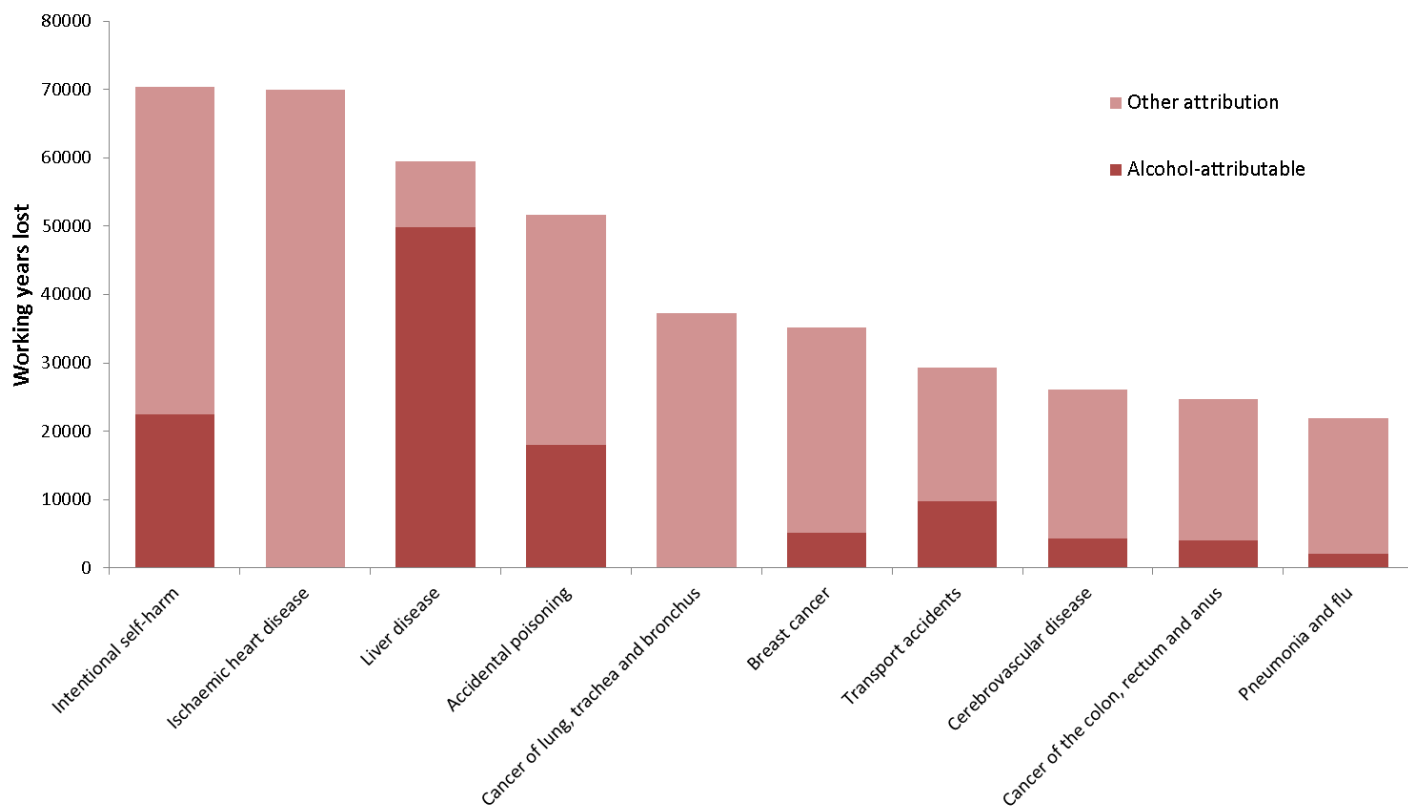


Table 2 below shows the 10 leading causes of cancer death in 2015 and their associated working years of life lost. These 10 causes combined led to 151,000 working years lost in England, 16,000 fewer than the estimated years lost due to alcohol. Note, C18-C21, C50, C15 and C22 all have an alcohol-attributable component.

Table 2: Deaths and working years of life lost for selected cancer types, England 2015

ICD code	Cause of death	Number of deaths	Working years of life lost
C33-C34	Cancer of the lung, trachea and bronchus	28,586	37,349
C18-C21	Cancer of the colon, rectum and anus	13,455	24,714
C61	Prostate cancer	10,017	2,695
C50	Breast cancer	9,626	35,517
C25	Cancer of the pancreas	7,494	11,646
C15	Cancer of the oesophagus	6,488	10,634
C67	Bladder cancer	4,482	3,320
C22	Liver cancer	4,159	7,181
C82-C85	Non-Hodgkins lymphoma	4,064	7,689
C91-C95	Leukaemia	3,884	10,557

Background

- these statistics were calculated for inclusion in the PHE alcohol evidence report 'The Public Health Burden of Alcohol and the Effectiveness and Cost-Effectiveness of Alcohol Control Policies: An evidence review', which was published on 2 December 2016
- working years of life lost are calculated as the number of years between a death in those aged 16 to 64 years and the age of 65 years
- deaths in those aged under 16 are allocated a loss of 49 years
- an alcohol-related death is defined by an underlying cause of death with a condition taken from the corresponding Alcohol Attributable Fraction lookup table, see Appendix 1 in (2)
- for partially attributable conditions, the number of working years lost are multiplied by the associated alcohol attributable fraction (AAF) before summing to provide a total for all alcohol-related conditions

References

1. Death rates and years of life lost. Office for National Statistics. Available from: <http://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/causesofdeath/datasets/deathratesandyearsoflifelostforcausesconsideredavoidableamenableandpreventableenglandandwalesandenglishregions>
2. Local Alcohol Profiles for England [Internet]. Public Health England; 2016. Available from: https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/documents/LAPE%202016%20User%20Guide_260416.pdf