

Abstract

Domestic abuse is increasingly recognised as a serious public health concern world-wide. Previous research has suggested a link between national football (soccer) tournaments and domestic abuse. While hypothesized to be a significant factor, the role alcohol plays in this relationship has not yet been explored quantitatively. In this study, using 10 years' worth of crime data (from 2010 to 2019) from the third largest police force in England (West Midlands police), we explored the effect of England draws, losses, and wins in national football tournaments on the number of alcohol and non-alcohol-related domestic abuse cases reported to the police. Results from a series of negative binomial regression analyses show that the number of reported alcohol-related domestic abuse cases increases by 47%, 95% confidence interval [26% – 71%], following an England football victory. This effect is limited to alcohol-related cases. The estimate translates into a 0.53, 95% CI [0.3 – 0.8], increase in the daily rate of alcohol-related cases per 100,000 individuals. The England win effect survives various robustness checks (including the re-analysis of a dataset from another geographical area in England), and its time course is strongly consistent with a causal link between England's football victories and an increase in alcohol-related domestic abuse. We also found a comparable increase in the number of other (non-domestic abuse related) alcohol-related violent crimes on England win days. Further research is required to understand the exact causal pathway between national football tournaments, alcohol consumption, and violent behaviours in domestic settings.

Keywords— football, domestic abuse, alcohol