

# Booze tax blues

*By ACSH Staff — September 27, 2010*

Increasing the tax on alcohol could make us all healthier by reducing drunk-driving deaths, cutting the spread of sexually transmitted diseases and lowering violence and crime, a [new meta-analysis](#) [1] claims.

Alexander Wagenaar, professor of health outcomes and policy at the University of Florida College of Medicine, looked at 50 papers published over the past 40 years examining how changes in alcohol prices affected public health. Higher priced alcohol improved every factor the analysis looked at except suicide rates, *Health News Daily reports* [2].

However, ACSH staffers are skeptical. “People who are addicted and abusing alcohol are going to buy it at almost price,” although most people use alcohol responsibly, says ACSH’s Dr. Elizabeth Whelan.

“You can have a 100 percent tax, and you could still find low-quality alcohol pretty cheap,” Stier says. “It’s a new puritanism. It has nothing to do with sound public health policy.”

“The author of this meta-analysis clearly has an agenda against alcohol,” says Dr. Ross. “He blames it for much of society’s ills, with no evidence to support his position.”

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## Links

[1] <http://ajph.aphapublications.org/cgi/content/abstract/AJPH.2009.186007v1>

[2] <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/39342283/ns/health-addictions/>