

A photograph of a broken wine glass lying on its side. The glass is shattered, with several sharp fragments visible. A vibrant red liquid, resembling wine or blood, has spilled out from the broken bowl and is pooling on the white surface. The background is a plain, bright white, which makes the red spill and the broken glass stand out prominently.

# ALCOHOL AND INJURIES

**Emergency Department Studies in  
an International Perspective**



**World Health  
Organization**



# ALCOHOL AND INJURIES

## **Emergency Department Studies in an International Perspective**

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## FOREWORD

The harmful use of alcohol is one of the main risk factors to health. It is responsible each year for about 2.3 million premature deaths worldwide. Injuries – both unintentional and intentional – account for more than a third of the burden of disease attributable to alcohol consumption. These include injuries from road traffic crashes, burns, poisoning, falls and drowning as well as violence against oneself or others. The impact of alcohol-related injuries affects not only those who are intoxicated at the time of injury occurrence, but also those who fall victim to their behavior. These include the pedestrian or cyclist knocked over by a drunk driver or the woman or children beaten by a drunk husband or father.

Alcohol-attributable injuries and violence are of growing concern to the World Health Organization. Alcohol-related injuries are especially evident in hospital emergency rooms and trauma centers. The clinical encounters in these settings present a one-time chance for health professionals to get access to a population often difficult to reach. Reduction of the burden of such injuries can be achieved by implementing evidence-based public health strategies, policy measures and effective interventions on a broad scale.

This publication draws together the current state of knowledge on research, practice and policy issues on the association of alcohol with injuries. It synthesizes the results of studies from a number of hospital emergency departments conducted in different cultural settings, including the World Health Organization's Collaborative Study on Alcohol and Injuries. The book provides an introduction to the epidemiology of alcohol-related injuries and refers to methodological issues of studies conducted in emergency departments. It also addresses public policy implications and equips the reader with practical information on interventions that can be implemented in emergency departments such as screening and brief interventions for hazardous and harmful drinking.

*Alcohol and Injuries: Emergency Department Studies in an International Perspective* will be a useful and important source for researchers, service providers and policy makers on international and national levels as well as for all those who are concerned with alcohol-related injuries and violence and the reduction of public health problems caused by the harmful use of alcohol.

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