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Understanding how people shop for soft drinks and alcoholic beverages in grocery stores; understanding drinking experiences at home

Submission date 12/01/2026	**Recruitment status** Recruiting	[X] Prospectively registered [_] Protocol [_] Statistical analysis plan [_] Results [_] Individual participant data [X] Record updated in last year
Registration date 12/01/2026	**Overall study status** Ongoing	
Last Edited 12/01/2026	**Condition category** Other	

Plain English summary of protocol

Background and study aims
Excessive alcohol consumption has detrimental health impacts. Hence, it is crucial to determine which interventions can help reduce the purchasing and consumption of alcohol in the UK. For example, calorie labelling alcoholic drinks may affect what people buy and drink. Whilst the few existing studies have generally not provided indication of beneficial effects, there is an insufficient number of studies of high methodological quality in the UK. In particular, we need to further explore how alcohol calorie labelling may influence alcohol-related behaviours in more 'real-world' scenarios, such as during an in-person supermarket shopping experience or when drinking alcohol at home.
As such, the main aim of this study is to understand whether alcohol calorie labelling may be effective for reducing alcohol purchasing and consumption amongst adults in the UK.

Who can participate?
Adults aged 18 years and over can participate if they are able to speak and read in English, provide written informed consent, and can attend the study in the lab in Leeds. We will exclude participants who may be at risk if they consume alcohol. We here considered this to be the following cases: if they report having had a history of alcohol consumption issues or mental health issues; are pregnant or intend on becoming pregnant, or take medication which advises against alcohol consumption. We also will be excluding participants who shop in a physical supermarket irregularly (here defined as less than once a month). Participants will not be able to participate if they do not consume alcohol at least once a week.

What does the study involve?
We will be comparing the effect of seeing alcoholic drinks with or without calorie labels on alcohol selection and consumption.
The first part of the study will be a simulated supermarket shopping task and the second, an at-home follow-up of participants' alcohol consumption for two weeks. In the shopping task, we will ask participants to shop as they would usually for a weekly shop for beverages and we will examine whether the calorie labels have an impact on what is selected. In the at-home task, we will ask participants to monitor their drinking for a 2-week period, to determine if the labels may

slow their consumption for example.
We will measure the total units of alcohol they select, as well as the total calories from the alcohol they selected. We will also determine how many days they took to consume all of the alcohol they went home with, as well as the total volume of alcohol they consumed and total calories from alcohol they consumed.

What are the possible benefits and risks of participating?
There will be no benefit to participation, but we also do not expect there to be downsides to their participation. We will mitigate the risk of excessive consumption of alcohol by limiting the amount they can bring home.

Where is the study run from?
The study is run by the Nuffield Department of Primary Care of the University of Oxford with Blue Yonder. The shopping task will take place in a shopper lab in Leeds. Participants' consumption at home will be assessed through online questionnaires on Qualtrics and through images of the alcoholic beverages submitted by participants to Blue Yonder.

When is the study starting and how long is it expected to run for?
January 2026 to April 2026

Who is funding the study?
National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) (UK)

Who is the main contact?
Dr Rachel Pechey, rachel.pechey@phc.ox.ac.uk

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Additional identifiers

Protocol serial number
N/A

Study information

Scientific Title
Understanding the impact of alcohol calorie labelling on alcohol and calorie selection, purchasing and consumption through a randomised experiment in a semi-naturalistic shopper lab and an at-home follow-up of UK adults

Study objectives
Hypotheses:
1. Alcohol calorie labels will reduce alcohol selection in a supermarket setting
2. Alcohol calorie labels will reduce at-home consumption of alcohol

Research Questions:
RQ1: What are the effects of alcohol calorie labels on alcohol selection in a supermarket setting?
RQ2: What are the effects of alcohol calorie labels on alcohol consumption in an at-home setting?
RQ3: Do the effects of alcohol calorie labels on selection and consumption differ by socio-

demographic characteristics?
RQ4: What are people's attitudes towards and understanding of alcohol calorie labels in real-world settings?

Ethics approval required
Ethics approval required

Ethics approval(s)
approved 01/10/2025, Medical Sciences Interdivisional Research Ethics Committee (MS IDREC) (Research Services, University of Oxford, Boundary Brook House, Churchill Drive, Oxford, OX3 7GB, United Kingdom; +44 (0)1865 (6)16577; ethics@medsci.ox.ac.uk), ref: MS IDREC 1799526

Study design
Single-centre interventional blinded randomized controlled trial

Primary study design
Interventional

Study type(s)
Prevention

Health condition(s) or problem(s) studied
Excessive alcohol consumption in UK adults

Interventions
Intervention: Placement of calorie labels on alcoholic beverages.

Qualtrics will randomise eligible participants to one of two groups: the intervention arm (alcohol calorie labels) or control arm (no labels). There will be an equal number of participants in each group (1:1 allocation).

This randomisation will determine which set of session slots (at the lab) are offered to each participant. The two groups will be shopping in the same lab but at different slots. The intervention group will shop when all alcoholic drinks in the lab are labelled with alcohol calorie labels and the control group will shop when no alcoholic drinks in the lab are labelled with alcohol calorie labels. The availability, positioning, and prices of all products in the lab for both groups will remain the same. There will be alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages. Calorie labels will have been placed on alcoholic drinks prior to the start of the study.

After the shopping task, participants will go home with some of the alcoholic drinks (labelled or not labelled, depending on their study condition) and their drinking will be followed up for 2 weeks.

Intervention Type
Other

Primary outcome(s)
The primary outcomes for the shopper lab task are:
1. Total units of alcohol from all alcoholselected measured by summing all units from the

beverages brought to the till at the end of the task in the shopper lab
2. Total energy (kcal) from all alcoholselected measured by summing all calories from the beverages brought to the till at the end of the task in the shopper lab

The primary outcome for the at-home consumption follow-up is:
1. Total days to consume all study alcohol, measured by self-reported starting and finishing dates of consumption based on labels and pictures of beverages over 2 weeks

Key secondary outcome(s))
1. Total volume of alcohol consumed (ml) in the 2-week period. This will be calculated using self-reported consumption data collected via labels, pictures and e-surveys (day 1 through to day 14).
2. Total caloric intake from alcohol within the 2-week period. This will be calculated using self-reported consumption data collected via labels, pictures and e-surveys (day 1 through to day 14).

Completion date
30/04/2026

Eligibility

Key inclusion criteria
1. Adults, aged ≥18 years
2. Able to speak and read English
3. Resident in UK; ability to attend the lab in Leeds
4. Willing and able to give informed consent for participation in the study

Participant type(s)
Population

Healthy volunteers allowed
No

Age group
Mixed

Lower age limit
18 years

Upper age limit
100 years

Sex
All

Total final enrolment
0

Key exclusion criteria
1. Does not drink alcohol at least once a week
2. Does not food shop in a physical supermarket at least once a month
3. Has alcohol issues i.e. has a history of alcoholism, has a history of alcohol dependency, has

been hospitalised due to becoming severely ill from alcohol or is recovering from alcohol issues
4. Reports a baseline consumption of alcohol that suggests higher risk drinking (i.e. 35 units or more). Higher risk drinking for women is regularly drinking 35 or more units per week and for men regularly drinking 50 units or more per week. We will use an adapted version of the AUDIT-C questionnaire to ascertain whether participants drink 35 units per week or more. We will conservatively use the women's rate as a cut-off, and exclude anyone whose answers suggest drinking at these levels
5. If 1/3 or more of total drinks regularly consumed are spirits, the person will be excluded
6.Takes medication which advises against the consumption of alcohol
7. Has a mental illness diagnosis
8. Pregnant or planning on becoming pregnant in the upcoming year

Date of first enrolment
19/01/2026

Date of final enrolment
31/03/2026

Locations

Countries of recruitment
United Kingdom

England

Study participating centre
Blue Yonder
4325 Park Approach
Thorpe Park
Leeds
England
LS15 8GB

Sponsor information

Organisation
University of Oxford

ROR
https://ror.org/052gg0110

Funder(s)

Funder type

Not defined

Funder Name
National Institute for Health and Care Research

Alternative Name(s)
National Institute for Health Research, NIHR Research, NIHRresearch, NIHR - National Institute for Health Research, NIHR (The National Institute for Health and Care Research), NIHR

Funding Body Type
Government organisation

Funding Body Subtype
National government

Location
United Kingdom

Results and Publications

Individual participant data (IPD) sharing plan
The datasets generated during and/or analysed during the current study will be stored in a publicly available repository. We will share anonymised data on OSF (https://osf.io/registries) once the study has been accepted for publication. Participants were informed of this in the Participant Information Sheet and Consent form.

IPD sharing plan summary
Stored in publicly available repository