ISRCTN33451258 https://doi.org/10.1186/ISRCTN33451258

Do different types of low alcohol labels influence the consumption of wine?

Submission date
09/05/2018

Recruitment status
No longer recruiting

Registration date
11/05/2018

Overall study status
Completed

Last Edited
02/03/2022

Condition category
Mental and Behavioural Disorders

[X] Prospectively registered
[ ] Protocol
[ ] Statistical analysis plan
[X] Results
[ ] Individual participant data

Plain English summary of protocol

Background and study aims
There is growing interest from policymakers and producers to extend the range of lower strength alcohol products above the current cap of 1.2% ABV set out in national legislation. There is however an absence of evidence concerning the impact on consumption of labelling alcohol products as lower in strength. A recent study found that the total amount of wine and beer consumed increased as the label on the drink denoted successively lower alcohol strength. Participants drank most when drinks were labelled as Super Low and least when labelled as Regular strength. However, the design of this study did not allow it to show whether the effects of the lower alcohol strength labelling stemmed from the verbal or the numerical descriptor of strength since all the labels denoting lower alcohol strength contained a combination of verbal and numerical information (% ABV). This study aims to fill this gap by examining which aspect of the label for a lower strength wine increases consumption, the verbal descriptor (Super Low), the percentage alcohol by volume (4% ABV), or their combination.

Who can participate?
Healthy volunteers, aged 18 or over, who consume wine at least once weekly

What does the study involve?
The study takes place in a laboratory setting that mimics a “bar” environment, located in central London. Participants are randomly allocated to one of three groups varying only in the labels used to describe the drinks they are invited to taste, and not in the actual drinks. Participants are asked to rate the quality of the wines and are then told that they can consume the remaining wine whilst answering questions regarding their drinking habits and motivations. The total volume of drink consumed and product appeal are measured.

What are the possible benefits and risks of participating?
The findings from this study will provide evidence of the impact of low alcohol labels on wine consumption. This study is considered to be low risk and no side effects are expected. Since participants will drink alcohol in this study, breathalysers will be used to ensure that at the end of the study participants are not intoxicated (participants will only be able to consume a maximum of 2.5 units of alcohol since all the wines will be of lower alcohol strength). If they are over the driving limit, they will be asked to remain in the lab until the effects of the alcohol have

worn off, or to take public transportation when leaving the testing venue. Participants who insist on leaving the lab before they are sober will be asked to sign a waiver stating they are aware of their breath alcohol concentration.

Where is the study run from?
Testing will take place in a bar lab located in central London. The study is run from the Behaviour and Health Research Unit at the University of Cambridge (UK)

When is the study starting and how long is it expected to run for?
November 2017 to October 2018

Who is funding the study?
National Institute for Health Research Policy Research Programme (UK)

Who is the main contact?
Prof. Theresa Marteau

Contact information

Type(s)
Scientific

Contact name
Prof Theresa Marteau

Contact details
Behaviour and Health Research Unit
University of Cambridge
Institute of Public Health
Forvie Site
Cambridge
United Kingdom
CB2 0SR

Additional identifiers

Protocol serial number
N/A

Study information

Scientific Title
Impact of different low alcohol labels on wine consumption: a bar lab experiment

Study objectives
This study will aim to answer the following question: which aspect of the label for a lower strength wine increases consumption: a verbal descriptor (Super Low), the percentage alcohol by volume (4% ABV), or their combination?

Ethics approval required

Old ethics approval format

Ethics approval(s)
Cambridge Psychology Research Ethics Committee, 10/01/2018, ref: PRE.2017.095

Study design
Randomised controlled trial

Primary study design
Interventional

Study type(s)
Prevention

Health condition(s) or problem(s) studied
Excessive alcohol consumption

Interventions
A between-subjects experiment with one independent factor of three levels corresponding to the label that accompanies wine for consumption. The trial has three different intervention arms. Participants are randomly allocated to taste test three glasses of wine, with all three glasses having one of three possible labels:
Group 1: Verbal descriptor only (Super Low)
Group 2: % ABV only (4% ABV)
Group 3: Verbal descriptor AND % ABV (Super Low AND 4% ABV)

Intervention Type
Behavioural

Primary outcome(s)
Total volume of drink consumed during the taste-test task measured in millilitres (ml). The taste-test task takes place immediately post-intervention

Key secondary outcome(s))
Product appeal, measured using validated questionnaire items with answers given on Likert-type rating scales. The measurement will take place immediately post-intervention with the labels (differing according to randomisation) displayed for participants to see.

Completion date
31/10/2018

Eligibility

Key inclusion criteria
1. Adult men and women (above 18 years of age)
2. Weekly wine drinker (consuming wine at least once a week)

Participant type(s)
Healthy volunteer

Healthy volunteers allowed
No

Age group
Adult

Lower age limit
18 years

Sex
All

Key exclusion criteria
1. Under 18 years of age
2. Non-weekly wine drinker
3. Pregnancy (women only)
4. Medication use (including antibiotics)
5. History of neurological or psychiatric disorders

Date of first enrolment
21/05/2018

Date of final enrolment
31/10/2018

Locations

Countries of recruitment
United Kingdom

England

Study participating centre
Behaviour and Health Research Unit
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Sponsor information

Organisation
University of Cambridge

ROR
https://ror.org/013meh722

Funder(s)

Funder type
Government

Funder Name
National Institute for Health Research Policy Research Programme (Policy Research Unit in Behaviour and Health [PR-UN-0409-10109])

Results and Publications

Individual participant data (IPD) sharing plan
The datasets generated during and/or analysed during the current study will be available upon request from Prof. Theresa Marteau.

IPD sharing plan summary
Available on request

Study outputs

Output type	Details	Date created	Date added	Peer reviewed?	Patient-facing?
Results article		10/02/2021	02/03/2022	Yes	No