

Carpenter, C. S., Kloska, D. D., O'Malley, P. M., & Johnston, L. D. (2007). Alcohol control policies and youth alcohol consumption: Evidence from 28 years of Monitoring the Future. *The B.E. Journal of Economic Analysis & Policy*, 7(1), Article 25.

Abstract

We provide the first historical comparative analysis of the effects of Minimum Legal Drinking Ages (MLDA), beer taxes, and “Zero Tolerance” (ZT) underage drunk driving laws on the drinking behaviors of high school seniors using confidential area-identified data from the 1976–2003 waves of the Monitoring the Future (MTF) Surveys. We estimate reduced form models of drinking participation and heavy episodic drinking that account for state and year fixed effects. Our findings confirm that nationwide increases in the MLDA in the late 1970s and 1980s and adoption of ZT laws in the 1990s both significantly reduced alcohol consumption by high school seniors, with larger effects for the MLDA than for ZT laws. Higher beer taxes are also estimated to reduce youth drinking participation. Overall, the results confirm that a variety of types of government intervention can have important effects on youth alcohol consumption.