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# Legal Access to Alcohol and Criminality

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## Abstract

Previous research has found strong evidence that legal access to alcohol is associated with sizable increases in criminality. We revisit this relationship using the census of judicial records on criminal charges filed in Oregon Courts, the ability to separately track crimes involving firearms, and to track individuals over time. We find that crime increases at age 21, with increases mostly due to assaults that lack premeditation, and alcohol-related nuisance crimes. We find no evident increases in rape or robbery. Among those with no prior criminal records, increases in crime are 50-percent larger—still larger for the most socially costly crimes of assault and drunk driving.

*JEL Codes:* K4, I1, D8

*Keywords:* alcohol, crime, minimum legal drinking age

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