

## Interventions delivered in drinking environments in Italy

### The Safe Driver project in Milan, Italy

The Safe Driver project was established in Milan to prevent alcohol-related road traffic crashes among young people using the city's nightclubs. It aimed to prevent drink driving by developing and promoting a designated driver programme. This provided incentives in the form of free nightclub entry to young drivers who acted as designated drivers and remained within the legal blood alcohol concentration (BAC) for driving.



Young drivers were identified by field workers intercepting groups of young people interested in participating were breathalysed and given a bracelet to wear. Upon leaving the club, the drivers returned to the fieldworkers to take another breathalyser test. Those who were below the legal drink driving limit were given a voucher providing them with free entry to the club during the following month. Those who were above the legal driving limit were advised not to drive and provided with alternative options for returning home.<sup>1</sup>

The intervention was evaluated through a study that compared the BAC of those identified as designated drivers to other nightclub users who were driving. Over the study period a total of 405 drivers were approached, and 368 agreed to take part. Of these, 124 took part (i.e. were offered the incentive to act as a designated driver), 139 acted as controls and 105 failed to return to the researchers at the end of the night. In addition to the BAC test, participants completed a questionnaire that collected information on their demographics, their alcohol consumption patterns and their drink driving behaviour.

The study found that the BAC of designated drivers was significantly lower than that of non-designated drivers upon leaving the nightclub. However, the intervention itself was only found to have motivated 5% of those identified as designated drivers to drink less. Most designated drivers (60%) reported having taken part in the intervention as they were interested in having their BAC assessed. Only 18% reported that the incentive had motivated their participation while 17% said that they were not intending to drink much anyway. Most (73%) designated drivers said they had consumed the same amount of alcohol as they normally would have done despite the intervention. Further, analysis found that individuals who acted as designated drivers had a lower risk profile than non-designated drivers; they reported lower levels of alcohol consumption in general and less involvement in drink driving. The authors concluded that the intervention was not supported by strong evidence.

1. Aresi G, Fornari L, Repetto C et al. Evaluation of a designated driver intervention to prevent alcohol-related road accidents in the clubs of Milan, Italy. *Adicciones* 2009; 21: 279-288.