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THE EFFECTS OF BEVERAGE TYPE ON SUICIDE RATES IN RUSSIA

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Objective: Previous research has suggested that the consumption of different types of alcoholic beverage may have a differential effect on suicide rates. The aim of this study was to examine the relation between the consumption of different beverage types and suicide rates in Russia across the later-Soviet and post-Soviet periods.

Method: Age-standardised sex- and age-specific suicide rates for the period 1980-2005 and data on beverage-specific alcohol sales were obtained Russian State Statistical Committee (Rosstat). Time-series analytical modelling techniques (ARIMA) were used to examine the relation between the sale of different alcoholic beverages and suicide rates.

Results: Vodka consumption as measured by sales was significantly associated with both male and female suicide rates. The consumption of beer and wine were not associated with suicide rates. The estimates of the age specific models for men were positive (except for the 75+ age group) and ranging from 0.069 (60-74 age group) to 0.123 (30-44 age group). The estimates for women were positive for the 15-29 age group (0.08), 30-44 age group (0.096) and 45-59 age group (0.057).

Conclusions: These findings suggest that public health efforts should focus on both reducing overall consumption and changing beverage preference away from distilled spirits in order to reduce suicide rates in Russia.