

World Cup football is a risk factor for domestic violence

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Domestic abuse increases during England World Cup football matches – especially if the team lose.

Researchers analysed figures from Lancashire Constabulary across three tournaments in 2002, 2006, and 2010.

After controlling for day of the week, incidents of [domestic abuse](#) rose by 38 per cent in Lancashire when the England team played and lost and increased by 26 per cent when the England national team played and won or drew compared with days when there was no England match. There was also a carry-over effect, with incidents of domestic abuse 11% higher the day after an England match.

The report was carried out by Dr Stuart Kirby and Professor Brian Francis of Lancaster University with Rosalie O'Flaherty and published in the *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*.

They found that the average number of incidents of domestic violence on the days when England played was 79.3 compared with 58.2 on the days the team did not play.

There was also evidence that incidents were high on the day following an England game, with an average of 70.5 reported cases, and the number of cases also rose whenever the England game was played on a weekend.

A police officer quoted in the report said: "The World Cup appears a reason for many to party, however delight and expectation can turn into despair and conflict with the kick of a ball."

The researchers also found that reported domestic abuse incidents increased in frequency with each new tournament, from an average of 64 in 2002 rising to 99 in 2010.

The researchers said there could be several factors behind these findings.

"The tournament is held in the summer and is associated with warmer temperatures, increased [alcohol consumption](#) and brings individuals in closer proximity to others.

"Although it is difficult to say the tournament is a causal factor, the prestigious tournament does concentrate the [risk factors](#) into a short and volatile period, thereby intensifying the concepts of [masculinity](#), rivalry and aggression."

They suggest the figures could have risen due to the increased commercialisation of the tournament.

A Social Services representative said: "The [tournament](#) goes on for a whole month – this creates all sort of problems, often aggravated by alcohol, on the smallest of issues such as what programme the TV is tuned into."

The researchers say these findings are significant because they could lead to new ways to tackle [domestic violence](#) and so reduce "the misery of abused partners, as well as the children and family members."

More information: Kirby, S., Francis, B. and O'Flaherty, R. Can the FIFA World Cup Football (Soccer) Tournament Be Associated with an Increase in Domestic Abuse?, *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*. [jrc.sagepub.com/content/early/ ... 27813494843.abstract](http://jrc.sagepub.com/content/early/.../27813494843.abstract)

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