

Decline in binge drinking 'helps cut UK violent crime'

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A decline in binge drinking in England and Wales has likely contributed to a significant fall in reported injuries from violent crime, researchers said on Wednesday.

The number of people who sought [medical treatment](#) for injuries from serious [violence](#) fell 12 percent to 234,509 last year, according to a study from Cardiff University.

The change, following a [downward trend](#) that began in 2001, reflects falling violence in many Western countries and the researchers admitted they did not know all the reasons why.

But a fall in heavy drinking in Britain was likely a factor, along with more targeted prevention efforts, according to Professor Jonathan Shepherd, lead author of the study.

"Binge drinking has become less frequent, and the proportion of youth who don't drink alcohol at all has risen sharply," he said.

"Also, after decades in which alcohol has become more affordable, since 2008 (the start of the recession), it has become less affordable.

"For people most prone to involvement in violence, those aged 18-30, falls in disposable income are probably an important factor."

He said joint efforts by the police, health and local authorities could also

have played a role, adding: "Violence has fallen more in regions where this is best organised."

The university collected data from 117 hospital emergency departments, minor injury units and walk-in centres.

Admissions resulting from serious violence have fallen every year in England and Wales since 2001, except in 2008, when there was a seven percent increase.

The Crime Survey of England and Wales, which measures people's experiences of crime, found a 13-percent decrease in [violent crime](#) in the year to September 2013.

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