

# Research finds 'extensive' drug culture in UK football

June 23 2023

---



Credit: Unsplash/CC0 Public Domain

Drug taking at football matches has superseded alcohol as a major safety concern, according to new research led by health and behavior experts at the University of Stirling.

The research, which sought to explore the relationship between football fans and [alcohol](#), found that both match-goers and organizations involved in match safety had noticed an increased use of cocaine by supporters. The paper, "Alcohol consumption among UK football supporters: Investigating the contested field of the football carnivalesque," was published in the journal *Drugs: Education, Prevention and Policy*.

One police representative described cocaine use as "extensive" and believed it had become a more influential factor in matchday violence and antisocial behavior.

The research included interviews with football supporters in England and Scotland as well as the police, U.K. and Scottish government advisors, football supporters' groups and safety organizations—with all participants sharing the view that cocaine had replaced alcohol as a major issue on matchdays.

Dr. Richard Purves, of Stirling's Institute for Social Marketing and Health and Principal Investigator on the project, said, "We found widely held concerns about a growing drug culture amongst football fans. Cocaine appears to be particularly prevalent and when used in conjunction with alcohol, was described as a 'perfect mix' in terms of its combined heightening of intoxicated, hedonic or transgressive experiences on matchday.

"Both organizational stakeholders and focus group participants reported what they believed was a growing drug culture in football. Further research is needed to fully understand the true extent and impact of controlled drugs on fans' behavior in both football and other sports, especially in the context of assessing the ramifications of this issue for potentially reforming regulations on the use of alcohol within the game."

The research also looked at how current legislation surrounding alcohol at football matches influences the alcohol consumption of people attending and to what extent supporters agree that elements of existing legislation concerning alcohol and football are fair, effective or in need of change.

## Current legislation

Under current legislation, football supporters in England are permitted to purchase alcohol at stadia—but it cannot be consumed within view of the pitch, while in Scotland, the general sale of alcohol is prohibited, other than in hospitality settings.

Those taking part in the study believed football supporters are perceived differently in comparison with supporters of other sports, arguing that legislation surrounding [alcohol consumption](#) at other sports allowed supporters to enhance a carnivalesque environment by drinking alcohol, whereas [football fans](#) were more restricted.

Participants also agreed [excessive drinking](#) and violence associated with [football](#) supporters led to a bad reputation, however, they believed that this view was outdated.

**More information:** Comille Tapiwa Bandura et al, Alcohol consumption among UK football supporters: Investigating the contested field of the football carnivalesque, *Drugs: Education, Prevention and Policy* (2023). [DOI: 10.1080/09687637.2023.2219370](https://doi.org/10.1080/09687637.2023.2219370)

Provided by University of Stirling

Citation: Research finds 'extensive' drug culture in UK football (2023, June 23) retrieved 6 May 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2023-06-extensive-drug-culture-uk-football.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.