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EFFECTIVENESS OF ALCOHOL TAX POLICY INTERVENTION FOR REDUCING ALCOHOL-RELATED MORTALITY RATES IN RUSSIA

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Background: The high level of alcohol consumption, together with a pattern of occasional excessive consumption of vodka (binge drinking), is associated with excessive effect on public health in the Russian Federation. Many experts believe that binge drinking of vodka is the main cause of the strikingly high alcohol-related mortality rates in Russia.

Objectives: To assess the relationship between alcohol taxes and alcohol-related mortality rates in Russia.

Methods: Trends in the excise tax rates for vodka and alcohol-related mortality rates between 2010 and 2015 were compared. To examine the relationship between the dependent variable (alcohol-related mortality) and independent variables (excise tax rates for vodka) a Spearman's correlation analysis was performed using the statistical package Statistica 12.StatSoft.

Results: Spearman's correlation analysis suggests a statistically significant inverse relationship between excise tax rates for vodka and mortality from alcohol dependence, alcoholic cardiomyopathy, alcoholic liver disease, alcoholic pancreatitis and alcohol poisonings.

Conclusions: The results of this study suggest an inverse aggregate-level relationship between excise tax rates for vodka and alcohol-related mortality rates in Russia. Given this evidence, raising excise tax rates for vodka appears to be an effective policy to reduce alcohol-related mortality rates in Russia.

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