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The impact of minimal alcohol price policy on premature CVD mortality in Kazakhstan

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Topic(s):
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Citation:

Background

In Kazakhstan, premature cardiovascular (CVD) mortality is one of the highest in the world despite the dramatic decline of CVD mortality since 2006. Our previous research found that alcohol consumption was the main determinant of premature CVD mortality in Kazakhstan and the decrease of alcohol use was the main factor influencing the CVD mortality decline.

Purpose

With the aim of examining the impact of minimal price changes for strong spirits (vodka) and alcohol sales on premature CVD mortality in 2006-2014, we compared age-specific CVD mortality for the age group 19-49 with changes in the minimal price of strong spirit (vodka) and alcohol sales.

Methods

Age-specific CVD mortality rates in age group 19-49 in Kazakhstan were obtained from the Global Burden of Disease database and explored with regard to changes in minimal prices of vodka and alcohol sales in Kazakhstan over this period.

Results

Age-standardized CVD mortality rates in age group 19-49 declined by 47% from 2006 to 2014, for both men and women. However, we observed the plateauing effect in CVD mortality trend in 2015-2017. These mortality trends coincided with the sharp increase in minimal vodka prices and decrease or flatten in alcohol sales in 2006-2014 period and consequent minimal price decrease and plateauing in 2015-2017 that was accompanied by increase of alcohol sales in this period.

Conclusions

Our findings indicate that public health measures such as tax increases for strong spirits can be a very effective CVD prevention strategy in Kazakhstan and other former USSR countries, where similar mortality trends can be observed. Unfortunately, this mortality decline was not sustained over time. We believe it happened due to a weakened policy in regard to the minimal alcohol prices. Therefore, there is much scope for further policy action in this area.
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Age-specific CVD mortality rates in age group 19-49 in comparison with vodka prices in USD in Kazakhstan