Author's response to reviews

Title: The effect of glass shape on alcohol consumption in a naturalistic setting: a feasibility study

Authors:

David M Troy Mr (david.troy@bristol.ac.uk)
Olivia M Maynard Dr (Olivia.Maynard@bristol.ac.uk)
Matthew Hickman Prof (Matthew.Hickman@bristol.ac.uk)
Angela S Attwood Dr (Angela.Attwood@bristol.ac.uk)
Marcus R Munafó Prof (Marcus.Munafo@bristol.ac.uk)

Version: 3 Date: 1 April 2015

Author's response to reviews: see over
1st April 2015

Dear Dr Lancaster,

Please find enclosed our revised manuscript, “The effect of glass shape on alcohol consumption in a naturalistic setting: a feasibility study” by David Troy et al. I have revised the manuscript in light of the reviewers’ comments and made required changes to the format of the paper which are detailed below.

Reviewer: 1

Minor Essential Revisions

1. Demand (paragraph 3): Licensing is not an area of my expertise; however, it is my understanding that licensing conditions can only be imposed on new premises or existing premises where there is a concern raised e.g. by the police. In this case most premises would not be forced to introduce straight glasses and this could create an unfair disadvantage (in terms of competition) for any new pub. Could the authors please clarify this and consider suggesting how the intervention might be implemented for existing licensed premises?

Thank you for highlighting this. You are correct that licensing conditions can be imposed on new or existing premises when a concern is raised. It is also possible for a member of the public to raise concerns about a licensed premises. Another avenue to implement new licensing conditions is when existing premises apply for a variation in their license, responsible authorities (e.g. local police force) can demand certain conditions be met (e.g. more straight glasses in stock) in order for the variation to be granted. We have amended the manuscript to include this extra information.

2. Background (paragraph 3): ‘This slowing of drinking rate is likely to have two effects: reduced intoxication and reduced consumption overall.’ Is there any evidence to support these effects you state that you can reference, or are they a common sense/intuitive suggestion? I think you need to be a little clearer about this as it is an important part of the translation from the
intervention changing drinking behaviour to actually having an impact on alcohol-related outcomes.

Thank you for highlighting this. The statement was an intuitive suggestion and we have amended it in the manuscript to make that clear.

3. Table 1: Is the * in the table linked to the sentence ‘Curved and straight refer to the shape of experimenter supplied glassware…’ If so, please could you make this clearer by including the * at the start of the table footnote.

We agree it was not obvious what the asterix was referring to, and have amended the footnote as follows: “Curved and straight refer to the shape of experimenter supplied glassware. * indicates where the public house used their normal range of glassware”.

4. Procedure (paragraph 2): Double check for consistency across the paper. Only a very minor point but here you state that ‘Glasses were delivered to each of the three public houses by the experimenters at the beginning of the first weekend’ but earlier (under Study Design) you mention that glasses were exchanged before the first weekend.

We have amended the above sentence as follows: “Glasses were delivered to each of the three public houses by the experimenters during the week before the first weekend”.

5. Practicality (paragraph 1): Could the authors be more cautious in making the statement ‘The three public houses, as suggested during post-study feedback, found the intervention practical to implement, notwithstanding the challenges encountered.’ One public house clearly did not find the intervention practical to implement – they pulled out in part because of the disruption to normal service. I would like to see this paragraph revised to better reflect that there are practical challenges to implementation.

We have revised this paragraph to better reflect the experience of one public house during the study.

6. Practicality (paragraph 3): Check consistency of tense throughout the paper. For example in this paragraph you switch between tenses in the following sentence ‘However, if there was a larger number of participating public houses involved, as will be the case in future studies, reporting aggregate amounts of monetary takings may have been possible’.

We have proof read the manuscript and amended where there is inconsistency of tenses.

7. Integration (paragraph 2): Given that some regular patrons expressed dislike at the new glassware, I would consider being more cautious about the statement ‘Moreover, since glassware is replaced regularly (due to breakages etc.) any transition will have negligible impact.’
Thank you for highlighting this oversight. We have revised this statement to take into account the impact that changing glassware may have on premises in light of some customer dissatisfaction with straight sided glasses.

Discretionary Revisions

8. Abstract (paragraph 4): Consider removing the sentence ‘Customers and staff are willing to engage with public health research in settings where alcohol is consumed, such as public houses.’ Did the customers know that they were engaging in public health research? If so, I would be concerned that this may have influenced their behaviour, but from reading the paper I was under the impression that they did not know.

You are correct that customers were naïve to the study. We have removed customers and staff from this sentence and replaced them with brewery owners and landlords to better reflect who we engaged directly with during the study.

9. Background (paragraph 1): Are you referring to the UK government guidelines in the sentence ‘defined as consuming above the recommended daily amounts of alcohol’? If so, I think it would be useful to be explicit here as some of the journal readership will be international.

We were referring to the UK government’s guidelines and we have now included this in the above sentence.

10. Practicality (paragraph 2): Please consider explicitly in the text that the reduction of 24% was not significant. I think most of the value in estimating the change in monetary takings in this feasibility study is to use the figure to estimate effect size in a sample size calculation for the full trial. It might help to be explicit about this in your reporting.

We have amended the section as follows: the direction of effect is in the same direction as a previous laboratory study investigating glass shape, though clearly the study is under-powered to support any hypothesis testing of the size of the effect. The main purpose in collecting these results was to inform the design of a future full trial.

Please address all correspondence to: David Troy, School of Experimental Psychology, University of Bristol, 12a Priory Road, Bristol BS8 1TU, United Kingdom. Email: david.troy@bristol.ac.uk.

Yours sincerely,
David Troy