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Was the Alcohol Psychoses Decline in Russia Attributable to Alcohol Control Policy?

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Introduction: Since 2003, Russia has experienced steep decline in alcohol psychoses incidence rate (APIR) and a parallel downward trend in the population drinking, driven mainly by a decrease in vodka (spirits) consumption. A coincidence in these trends allows us to hypothesize that the reduction in the APIR during recent decade might be attributed to the shift in the structure of consumption from vodka towards beer as a result of alcohol policy reforms. **Objectives:** In this study we will test the hypothesis of beverage-specific effect on APIR by analyzing Russian's time series data. **Methods:** Time-series analytical modeling techniques (ARIMA) were used to examine the relation between the sale of different alcoholic beverages (vodka, wine, beer) and APIR between 1980 and 2010. **Results:** The analysis suggests that of the three beverages vodka alone was associated with APIR. The estimated effect of vodka sale on the alcohol psychoses rate is clearly statistically significant: a 1 liter increase in vodka sale would result in a 27.4% increase in the APIR. **Conclusions:** The findings from this study provide support for the hypothesis that the shift in the structure of consumption from vodka towards beer as a result of alcohol control measures has had a positive impact on bringing down the APIR in Russia during recent decade. This research evidence also suggest that Russian government's attempt to curb the high level of alcohol-related problems have been successful and provide additional evidence that pricing policy may be an effective strategy to reduce an alcohol-related burden.