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## One in five hospital patients have a problem with alcohol

One in 10 people admitted to an NHS hospital are addicted to alcohol, new research finds.

The Society for the Study of Addiction (SSA) at King's College London has found that one in five patients admitted to hospital beds are using alcohol in a harmful way; while one in 10 are completely dependent on the substance.

The SSA's [review](#) gathered results from 124 previous studies, pulled from the data of 1.6 million hospital inpatients. The patients were from a wide range of departments, including general wards, intensive care units, A&E departments or mental health inpatient units across the country.

Alcohol is the biggest cause of A&E admissions, costing the NHS up to £3.5 billion per year. The problem appears to be more prevalent in mental health inpatient trusts, as addiction and dependency are huge contributing factors for patients with long-term [anxiety](#), [schizophrenia](#), and [depression](#).

Dr Emmert Roberts, a co-author of the review, said that the evidence mounting up is far from anecdotal and doctors are aware that this is a constant problem with inpatients. "Dedicated inpatient alcohol care teams are needed to ensure this widespread problem is being addressed, particularly in the context of diminishing numbers of specialist community alcohol services in the UK."

Dr Richard Piper, CEO Alcohol Change UK said: "As dedicated alcohol treatment services have faced years of swingeing cuts, hospitals are being left to pick up the pieces - but most simply do not have the expertise or capacity to do so, resulting in alcohol problems going untreated and those suffering returning to hospital time and time again."

Currently, the UK is undergoing a major change with increasing minimum alcohol prices to deter consumers from binge drinking.

*The research was published in [Addiction](#).*

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