

UK Alcohol industry forges historic partnership to create a trust of industry and Non-Government Organisations to promote the responsible consumption of alcohol

The Portman Group signed a historic agreement with Government and health industry stakeholders in June that will transform its existing campaigning arm Drink AWARE into a new self-governing Trust.

The Drinkaware Trust, (when the board is appointed they may decide to change the name of the Trust) is to be set up to improve public awareness and understanding about responsible drinking and positively to change the nation's drinking behaviour. The Trust will begin to operate independently later this year.

The idea of organisations such as Alcohol Concern and industry representatives working together to promote a common goal of reducing damaging patterns of drinking is unprecedented, and will hopefully set a model for other countries. In the light of the recent news that French NGO's are refusing to sit with industry to discuss a similar arrangement in France (see page 3), it seems likely that the UK's success in finding common ground that can be attributed to the small steering group who have forged an acceptable memorandum of understanding for Government, industry, health charities and alcohol focused NGO's to sign up to.

The new Trust will be seeking 13 independent Trustees to join its board from a broad base including alcohol experts from the health, education and voluntary sectors as well as from the drinks industry. They will be tasked with devising and

delivering a programme to promote responsible drinking and with providing project aid for local and national initiatives for tackling alcohol harm.

The alcohol industry has pledged several million to the charity over the next three years and will also throw its significant weight behind promoting the charity's consumer information website www.drinkaware.co.uk in advertising, at point of sale and on product labels. The Government Alcohol Policy Team is simultaneously developing a series of sensible drinking messages and a universal formula of information to appear on packaging, advertising and associated material with producers. A sensible drinking advertising campaign will be launched in September.

Jean Coussins, retiring Chief Executive of The Portman Group, said: 'The Trust will build on the previous work of the Portman Group and become a national public facing body which aims to improve public behaviour and the UK drinking culture in order to reduce alcohol misuse and minimise alcohol related harms... We are delighted that the alcohol industry has played such an active role in taking the alcohol harm reduction strategy forward. This ground breaking approach demonstrates the benefits of the industry, government and other stakeholders working in partnership around a shared agenda'.

The new Trust also has the support of the Scottish Executive, the Welsh

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Assembly and the Northern Ireland Office who have all signed the agreement.

The Portman Group will continue to operate its Code of Practice on marketing standards for producers and its Proof of Age card scheme under the Directorship of David Poley.

DRINKAWARE.CO.UK TEXT ONLY VERSION SEARCH

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Canada

As a result of the 2006 Federal Budget, the pricing structure for beverage alcohol in Ontario was adjusted on July 1, 2006. The changes include a decrease in the Federal GST from 7% to 6% and modifications to Alcohol Excise Levies. Price impacts will vary by category and price point, with some product prices increasing, some decreasing, and some remaining the same. Duty on wine with an ABV over 7% will rise to \$0.62. Domestic vintners will be exempt from duty on the first 500,000 litres of wine produced and packaged annually from 100% Canadian-grown grapes.

Russia

Russia's interior minister, Rashid Nurgaliyev has recently announced that poisoning by counterfeit alcohol kills 42,000 Russians every year. He alleges that bottles of alcohol on sale in Russian shops often do not contain vodka or brandy or wine, but any number of potentially fatal substances, calling the problem a "national tragedy". He also repeated claims heard from the Russian ministry of health, that much of the wine from the former Soviet Union is counterfeit and potentially harmful.

Mr Nurgaliyev has led efforts to crack down on alcoholism in Russia where it is estimated that 1 in 3 Russian men and 1 in 7 Russian women suffer from alcohol dependency. Mr Nurgaliyev has adopted tougher measures to try to deal with the problem.

The California Senate Select Committee on Children conducted a hearing in early June to discuss Senate Bill 1180 requiring the Secretary of the California Health and Human Services Agency, in consultation with other entities, to develop a report to the Legislature summarizing the most recent research, data, and other relevant information about alcoholic

Australia

Several thousand people in New South Wales have completed the Sober Driver Program, after being caught behind the wheel with a blood alcohol level above the legal limit. Justice Minister Tony Kelly says independent research shows the programme is helping participants realise the dangers of driving under the influence of alcohol.

'The New South Wales Government's Sober Driver Programme has halved the number of cases of repeat drink-drivers,' he said. 'We've had an independent evaluation of the programme and that's found that repeat drink-driver offenders, who completed the programme, were half as likely to re offend as those repeat drink-drivers who do not participate.'

UK

The Department of Health has set up a working group with industry to examine the use of industry 'responsibility messages' and the Government's 'Sensible Drinking Message' on labels and packaging.

The Home Office, DEFRA and DCMS are also represented on the Group. Research is being commissioned by the Department to examine how members of the public react to such information, and what they find helpful. The group will address specifically the wording on alcohol labels regarding alcohol and pregnancy. It will also aim to establish a firm definition of what constitutes binge drinking.

US

beverage use by California's underage youth. The report must include recommendations for additional action to prevent underage alcohol use, including legislative changes and suggestions for new or modified programs. The bill references alcopops in particular and cites the increasing efforts of alcohol advertisers to influence youth

Advertising in France

The Paris High Court has banned Brasseries Kronenbourg, from using its 1664 adverts featuring a red saloon bar, a purple restaurant table and a blue bedroom. The ban is the result of a case brought to court by national alcohol prevention association ANPAA. The Association claimed that the adverts were a poorly-disguised attempt to encourage people to drink beer when national law – i.e the Loi Evin – restricts advertising to the portrayal of accurate, objective information. Failure to comply with the ban will result in a 5,000 euro fine for each illegal ad. ANPAA, filed complaints in the past for adverts featuring Burgundy and Bordeaux wines. In a press statement following the court decision, it condemned a partnership agreement recently struck between Brasseries Kronenbourg and the national driving school centre CER, claiming that the agreement was no more than a publicity stunt.

A Loire Valley ad campaign, which has been running in France for the past two years, has also been criticised by the ANPAA. They claim that it appeals to young, potentially underage drinkers and must thus be banned. The association has taken the Loire Valley trade board to court over two adverts, one for red wines carrying the strapline ‘Enfin des jeunes qui ont du

goût’ (At last, some young ones with taste), the other for Cabernet d’Anjou : ‘Qui ose dire que jeunesse ne rime pas avec délicatesse’ (Who dare say that youth and elegance don’t go together).

According to ANPAA, both of these straplines use puns to convey the idea that Loire Valley wines are a fitting choice for young people and they are illegal in that they do not simply provide the consumer with objective information on the wines. René-Louis David who runs the InterLoire trade board commented that ‘the aim of the campaign is simply to remind the consumer that Loire Valley wines, contrary to many other French appellation wines, are mostly drunk young. We are dumbfounded by the court case because the campaign has been running for two years and has already been widely viewed’. The trade board is also stunned by news that the indictment also involves the warning statement : ‘A consommateur avec modération’ (Drink in moderation). ANPAA claims that the trade has added the statement to mitigate the impact of the compulsory warning ‘L’Abus d’alcool est dangereux pour la santé’ (Excess drinking is hazardous for your health). The court’s decision will be announced on July 10th.

Source *Journee Vinicole*

NPAA rejects French Moderation panel

On the 27 June in Paris, Dr Alain Rigaud, President of the ANPAA announced that his Association will not take part in the Moderation and Prevention Committee. La Société Française d’Alcoologie (SFA), la Fédération des Acteurs de l’Alcoologie et de l’Addictologie (F3A), la Fédération Française d’Addictologie (FFA), et le Collège Universitaire National des Enseignants en Addictologie (CUNEA) have taken the same stance.

The ANPAA says it is willing to take part in work and advice on moderation, but it believes the Committee will make no valid contribution to the public health field. They believe that most of the MP’s and Senators invited to sit on the panel are supporters of the wine industry. The Presidents of the Senate and the lower House of Parliament have spoilt the possibility of convening a Council enabling dialogue between Producers and other stakeholders. L’ANPAA states that the advice Council is purely a place for the orchestrations of partisans and categories of the trade to the detriment of the general good! The public health of France does not merit such an affront, hence all the addiction and Alcoholic associations refuse to take part.

Their renunciation does not mean they reject any dialogue with the industry - but the method proposed does not guarantee them the impartiality they would require in order to take part.

Pernod Ricard’s Sustainable Development charter

Pernod Ricard published its sustainable development charter on the 40th anniversary of the foundation of the Paul Ricard Oceanographical Institute, which was set up to further knowledge of, and protect, the marine environment. The Charter sets out Pernod Ricard’s six commitments on product quality, responsible drinking, respecting the environment and its dealings with its own people, its shareholders, suppliers and customers: to offer products of the highest quality to consumers; to encourage ethical marketing and responsible drinking; to

conserve natural resources and respect the environment; to build a relationship with its people based on loyalty and respect; to offer shareholders an attractive investment; to share with others its code of ethics and sustainable development values.

Over time, these commitments have been turned into several practical steps. These seek, in a process of continuous improvement, to reconcile economic efficiency with social fairness and the protection of the environment. The Charter

demonstrates Pernod Ricard’s resolve to operate in a manner consistent with its own values, as well as with a strict observance of the laws and regulations of the countries where it does business.

Speaking about the Charter’s creation, Patrick Ricard said, ‘This Charter is Pernod Ricard’s way of underlining the Group’s commitments and making our people around the world aware of them. By upholding these commitments, the Group will ensure its long term success.’

European Commission proposes reform of wine industry in EU25

On 22nd June the European Commission called for a reform of the Common Market Organisation for wine. The plan aims to increase the competitiveness of EU wine producers, strengthen the reputation of EU wines, win back market share, balance supply and demand and simplify the rules, while preserving the best traditions of EU wine production and reinforcing the social and environmental fabric of rural areas.

The Commission considers four options for reform, and comes out clearly in favour of a radical reform model specific to the wine sector. This would involve either a one-step or a two-step approach. The two-step approach would begin with measures to bring supply and demand back into balance before focusing on improving competitiveness, including the abolition of the system of planting rights. Producers would be offered generous incentives to grub up uneconomic vineyards, outdated market support measures such as distillation would be abolished and the systems of labelling and wine-making practices would be updated and simplified. Money would be redirected towards Rural Development measures tailor-made

for the wine sector and Member States would receive a national financial envelope to pay for measures decided at national level. Under the "one-step" variant, the system of planting rights restrictions would be either allowed to expire on 1 August 2010, or be abolished immediately, and the current grubbing-up scheme would also be abolished at the same time. After an in-depth debate on its ideas, the Commission plans to table legislative proposals in December 2006 or January 2007.

Reform measures would include: A clearer, simpler, more transparent quality policy, establishing two classes of wine: wine with Geographical Indication and wine without GI; Simpler labelling rules, to help consumers and make it easier for producers to compete. This would include allowing the indication of grape variety and vintage on wines without GI status, which is not possible under current rules; Transfer of responsibility for approving new wine-making practices to the Commission. Recognition of wine-making practices accepted by the OIV; A ban on the use of sugar for enriching the alcohol content of wine.

Beer consumption in Baltic markets

Euromonitor International have identified a trend in the consumption of beer in the Baltic markets towards to - 'less but better' They report 'Generally, there has been strong growth in beer volumes across the [Baltic] region in the last five years, with total sales volumes for all three countries rising by 26.5% between 2000 and 2005. The buoyant Baltic beer market has been underpinned by low prices, as intense competition has slowed price inflation. Low prices and consumer loyalty to local products have made it more difficult for imported brands to gain a foothold.

Nevertheless, imported brands are forging a presence and are contributing to a premium shift across the Baltic region. Consumption patterns are changing, with quality becoming a more important purchase criterion. Even though consumers may be drinking more frequently, there is less emphasis on quantity, with both local and imported premium beers showing growth. Brewers are targeting the higher-margin on-premise market, with stronger brews as out-of-home consumption becomes more popular. In 2005, on-trade sales accounted for 33% of total beer consumption across the three Baltic countries, up from less than 29% in 2000, representing a marked contrast to other European countries where off-sales are growing at the expense of the on-premise market.

Increased demand for premium offerings is a key growth factor common to all three markets, as drinkers respond both to government action on the one hand and on the other to brewers' marketing strategies to trade consumers up to higher-margin premium beers. This is resulting in changing habits as traditional binge-drinking behaviour is replaced by more cultured, moderate imbibing'.

Lack of response to Alcohol Concern promotions campaign

Alcohol Concern has had no responses to its campaign to crack down on cheap drinks promotions. In its May Promo-Busters project, the charity named and shamed outlets that serve alcohol at very low prices. A spokeswoman for the charity said none of the pubs or clubs in the survey

had commented and no one had cited any more examples of irresponsible retailing. The charity is attempting to collect more information and is asking the public to bring to their attention any drinks promotions which they feel are unsuitable.

Government and pub trade agree new responsibility action plan in the UK

UK Pub industry leaders and Government Ministers have agreed a new action plan which will target issues such as sales to under 18s, continue to improve drinks retailing standards and deliver responsible trading practices over the World Cup and summer period.

Industry leaders from some of the country's largest pub and nightclub operators, along with Home Office Minister Vernon Coaker and Licensing Minister Shaun Woodward, have agreed a new partnership approach, with an action plan focused on delivering four key objectives: to seek to eliminate sales to under 18s; the continued implementation of the Challenge 21 initiative designed to ensure younger customers understand that no age ID means no sale; to tackle and drive down sales to people who are already drunk; to impress on Government the detailed long-standing plans that have been put in place to ensure a successful, well-managed World Cup and summer period.

The industry action plan will be supported by increased enforcement

activity by the police, trading standards and local authority licensing teams.

'This action plan with Government shows our sector's determination to tackle and solve problems and continue to improve practice,' said Rob Hayward, Chief Executive of the British Beer & Pub Association.

'Excellent progress is being made in many areas. Now, we must go further faster, and in particular seek to eliminate sales to under 18s. Since implementation of the new licensing regime in November last year we have seen consistent reductions in alcohol-related crime and disorder across the country and improvements in the environment of the night time economy. We need to build further on that encouraging foundation by ensuring good practice continues to improve and is spread more widely'.

Home Office Minister, Vernon Coaker, said: *'An action plan has been drawn up by the industry themselves and I am looking forward to working alongside them to improve standards, eliminate underage sales, helping to create a more civilised and responsible drinking culture.'*

UK hospital alcoholic liver disease admissions double

Hospital admissions for alcoholic liver disease more than doubled to 35,400 in 2004-5 from 14,400 in 1995-6, according to a report from the National Health Service. Admissions for alcohol poisoning rose to 21,700 cases from 13,600 over the same period. In-patient hospital care for individuals with mental health or behavioural disorders from alcohol abuse jumped to 126,300 cases from 72,500, a rise of 75 percent over 10 years.

'It shows we cannot underestimate the effect of alcohol on health,' said Denise Lievesley, chief executive of The Information Centre, the NHS special health authority which compiled the report.

'By presenting this data, we hope that health professionals will be better equipped to put their work in context and to raise awareness of the dangers of alcohol misuse.'

The Department of Health said it was launching a joint campaign with the Home Office later this year to promote sensible drinking among young people.

'We know that alcohol misuse has a devastating effect on millions of lives each year,' a health department spokeswoman said. *"That is why we are working with the drinks industry, police and health professionals to increase awareness of the dangers of excessive drinking and make the sensible drinking message easier to understand."*

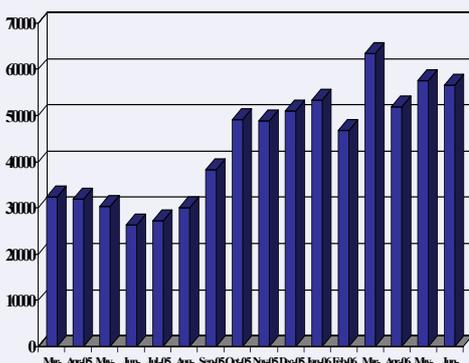
www.drinkingandyou.com update

A new section 'alcohol and its effects' has been added to the UK, US and Canadian www.drinkingandyou.com websites in June, this follows the

complete update of the UK and US consumer sites this year.

Traffic to AIM's websites has doubled in the last year, with visits consistently between 50,000 and 60,000 a month (we separate true visits from 'hits', which number in the millions).

It is planned to relaunch an updated French site in the autumn. AIM would welcome potential partners to help update AIM's other consumer websites (Germany, Sweden, Canada and Spain). For more information please contact Helena.conibear@aim-digest.com



Lord Healey's theory on mediterranean diet

Research by the European Union highlights differences across EU countries for both life expectancy and the expected number of years of fit and active life. They emphasise that their findings are only provisional and their figures are only estimates, but they hope the study will encourage countries to focus healthcare on increasing the number of "healthy years" enjoyed by their citizens and not simply on extending lives.

Differences across Europe for life expectancy are relatively small, but the differences in quality of life are much more significant, researchers believe. Based on questionnaires filled in by about 60,000 households around the EU each year, the survey found that British men can expect to live 76.2 years with an average of 61.5 years free of any disabling condition, which means that they spend just under 81% of their life in good health. This makes them the fifth unhealthiest men in the EU. The healthiest, Italians, spend 70.9 years in good health, equivalent to 92.3% of their lives. British women

can expect 60 years of fit and active life. In Italy, the healthiest nation, they can expect to enjoy robust health until they are over 74.

Only Portugal, Finland and Hungary rank lower than Britain. British women live the fifth lowest number of years without a debilitating illness.

Researchers have not yet been able to explore the reasons for the variation. James Goodwin, head of research at Help the Aged in Britain, said part of the reason could be smoking and diet, differences in organisation of healthcare and climate.

Lord Healey, 88, a former Labour Chancellor, commented that he was not surprised Italy produced the healthiest old people. *'In the old days the big division was the Iron Curtain. Now the most important division is the olive line.'*

'North of that line, where olives don't grow and there is less sun, people are less happy and live less long. South of the olive line, it's the opposite.'

Establishing rates of binge drinking in the UK

A study by John McAlaney and John McMahon from the Centre for Alcohol and Drug Studies, University of Paisley conducted an analysis of several UK government funded studies that have been influential in understanding rates of 'binge drinking' in the UK. The research aimed to establish consistency between results and clarify UK rates of binge drinking.

The researchers compared relevant sections of the Scottish Health Survey (SHS) 1998, the General Household Survey (GHS) 2002, and the Health Survey for England (HSE) 2003. In addition the methodology used by the Health Protection Agency in the Adult Drinking Patterns in Northern Ireland (2003) was compared with the approach used by the SHS, GHS, and HSE.

The researchers observe marked differences between the results of the GHS 2002 and both the SHS 1998 and the HSE 2002 despite each using a similar methodology, with the HSE 2003 reporting a rate of 'binge drinking' in young males of 57%, and the GHS reporting a rate of 35%. This difference may be largely attributed to variations in the criteria in binge drinking in each study. These differences in interpretation do not appear to have been acknowledged. Indeed several key documents on alcohol harm reduction made inaccurate citations of previous surveys.

The authors conclude that the media rhetoric on escalating rates of binge drinking in the UK should be regarded with caution until trends are based on standardized recording and reporting.

	Men years of healthy life	Average age of death	Women years of healthy life	Average age of death
EU average	64.5	76	66	81.2
Finland	57.3	75.1	56.5	81.8
France	60.6	75.9	63.9	82.9
Germany	65	75.7	64.7	81.4
Italy	70.9	76.8	74.41	82.5
Netherlands	61.7	76.2	58.8	80.9
Poland	62.5	70.5	68.9	78.8
Spain	66.8	76.9	70.2	83.6
UK	61.5	76.2	60.9	80.7

Source: Eurostat.

The Century Council reminds Americans drink responsibly for 4th July

Last year in the US 39% of all traffic fatalities nationwide were alcohol-related, but during last year's 4th of July holiday, alcohol-related traffic fatalities accounted for 48% of the total number of traffic fatalities during the holiday weekend, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. "In advance of the Fourth of July holiday, a time when drunk driving incidents escalate, I encourage Americans to join The Council's efforts to fight drunk driving," said Susan Molinari, Chairman of The Century Council.

A survey commissioned by The Council revealed that 72% of adults do not know the blood alcohol

concentration (BAC) limit for driving in their own state. The Council encourages adults who choose to drink alcohol to visit the Blood Alcohol Educator at www.b4udrink.org to learn how alcohol affects their individual BAC level. Available in English and Spanish, the programme estimates a user's BAC level based on their sex, weight and the type and number of drinks consumed at the program's "virtual bar." In addition to reflecting a person's individual BAC level, the programme includes a virtual clock that demonstrates how fast an individual's BAC level rises well as how long it takes it to return to .00.

Alcohol permit success in Aboriginal community

An Aboriginal community off Australia's far north coast is reporting good progress in reducing alcohol-fuelled violence among its 3,000 people.

An alcohol permit system implemented on Groote Eylandt has seen alcohol related crime drop by up to 80%. Since July 2005, only permit holders have been allowed to purchase take away alcohol. Tony Wurramarra, chairman of the local Aboriginal Land Council says the mood amongst Aboriginal people since the restriction system has been implemented has improved significantly. He explained that the community had to address serious grog abuse problems that were leading to domestic violence and child neglect.

Anyone who wants buy or consume alcohol must have a permit, and there are set areas where alcohol can be consumed. Any resident who applies for a permit may be investigated by a community-based committee and applicants have to meet certain criteria

to get a permit. There had been restrictions previously, but they were hard to police and alcohol was easily available in the mining town of Alyangula.

One of the key features of the system is that it's easier to police and permits can be suspended. Rick Peters from the mining company Gemco, which along with traditional owners, police and other groups helped develop the system, explained 'If I had a function in my house I would actually have to check that people have permits to consume otherwise my permit is at risk. So it puts the responsibility for permits back on the permit holders and the management of alcohol in your life is your responsibility'. Peters also reported that the indigenous absentee rates at the manganese mine have fallen from eight and a half to about two per cent as a result of the permit system.

Local Aboriginal leaders say it will take time to see the full benefits in areas like health and education

Importance of senior drinkers

While many marketers still consider senior drinkers to be part of a cliched, uniform group, Europe's rapidly ageing population has resulted in older drinkers becoming increasingly more diverse, and drinks producers should take care not to neglect this growing group by marketing their products to an exclusively younger audience.

Seniors are trading up for their drinks. According to Datamonitor figures, the senior alcoholic drinks market - which includes those aged 50 and over - is forecast to shrink in volume terms by almost 20% between 2005 and 2010 in the UK, but the monetary value of the market is expected to grow from GBP14.3 billion to GBP16.6 billion over the same period.

UK seniors are reasonable drinkers and have one of the lowest consumption of pure alcohol in Europe, at 7.9 litres per head. Seniors are adopting a less but of the best' approach to alcoholic beverages. The volume of the seniors market is on the wane but value continues to grow as seniors use their affluence and more developed sense of connoisseurship to trade up.

Across the seven European countries surveyed by Datamonitor, France has the highest consumption rate at an average of 11.4 litres of pure alcohol per head compared with the European average of 9.8 litres. Germany came a close second, with the average seniors knocking back 11.2 litres of pure alcohol.

The UK came fifth, behind Italy, at 7.8 litres. The Netherlands and Sweden are at the bottom, consuming an average of 7.2 and 6.0 litres, respectively.

Datamonitor suggests that serving older consumers will become increasingly vital to drinks producers, as the numbers of individuals in the senior age group continues to swell.

US beer industry and social responsibility

In response to US National Alcohol Awareness month, Jeff Becker, president of the Beer Institute, summarised the US beer industry's continued efforts aimed at curtailing illegal underage drinking and drunk driving as well as the associations and individuals who have contributed 'to decades of progress in reducing alcohol abuse'. Becker stated 'over the last several years we have seen a convergence of data indicating that efforts to reduce illegal underage drinking and drunk driving, such as education, awareness, and enforcement of the law, are having a measurable impact...While there is more work to be done, we are pleased about the progress that has been made and are committed to continuing our efforts focused on these serious issues....Several recent studies by well respected, independent government and non-profit institutions have highlighted a growing positive trend in reduced underage drinking and drunk driving in the United States. Some of the encouraging findings, also available in the Beer Institute 2005 Signs of Progress report, include:

According to the U.S. Department of Transportation, the number of alcohol-related fatalities from motor vehicle crashes have declined for the second consecutive year and are down 39% since 1982. The alcohol-related fatality rate is down 10% since 2000 and the lowest ever recorded by the Department of Transportation. Partnership for a Drug-Free America reported that all measures of teen alcohol use in 2004 declined significantly from 1998.

According to the 2004 National Survey on Drug Use and Health, 82.3% of adolescents, ages 12 through 17, do not drink.

According to the largest and longest running nationwide study of college students, administered by the University of California in Los

Angeles and the American Council on Education, beer drinking among college freshman is 10% lower than in 2000 and at its lowest level since the survey began in 1966.

The well respected University of Michigan Monitoring the Future Survey has reported that the use of alcoholic beverages has generally been in decline among American teens for the last several years. According to the survey, the percentage of high-school seniors who reported having a drink in the last 30 days is at the lowest level since tracking began in 1975, 6% lower in 2005 than in 2000, and down 33% since 1982.

A great deal of this success can be credited to the unprecedented cooperation of public, private, and non-profit partnerships in dealing with these issues, added Becker.

The Beer Institute notes that Brewers have worked closely with state alcohol beverage control agencies and government agencies such as the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), and the AdCouncil, where members provided consultation for a campaign encouraging parents of teens to talk with their children about underage drinking.

Independently, brewers have also distributed more than 6 million guidebooks, videos, and other materials aimed at creating a dialogue between parents and their children on underage drinking, as well as more than 1.5 million cards and stickers to help retailers check IDs and prevent sales to minors.

To view the Beer Institute 2005 Signs of Progress Report and a complete list of the beer industry responsibility initiatives, please visit the Beer Institute web site at

www.beerinstitute.org.

The National Beer wholesalers brochure 'Promoting Responsibility in Our Communities' illustrates how beer wholesalers play a vital role in their communities by sponsoring a vast array of programmes that promote responsible consumption. The programmes range from providing free taxi rides home for restaurant patrons who do not have a designated driver, to sponsoring alcohol-free after prom events and producing educational materials to help parents talk to their children about illegal underage drinking.

Wholesalers also promote alcohol education initiatives that bring guest speakers into local schools and community centers - guest speakers who have made mistakes about alcohol, but have lived to retell their story and encourage others not to make the same mistakes. Working with their brewer partners, the families who distribute America's beverage help ensure that the products they provide are consumed moderately and responsibly only by those of legal drinking age.

To view the NBWA wholesaler responsibility publication please visit

http://www.nbwa.org/nbwa/Resources/Publications_Media/

UK pub staff act responsibly

More than 1000 people have achieved the British Institute of Innkeeping (BII) Award in Alcohol Retailing (ARA) since it's launch in November 2005.

The award was created to give people who sell alcohol, but do not hold a personal licence, the opportunity to gain valuable knowledge about their responsibilities under the new licensing act.

Subjects covered include recognizing drunkenness, combating alcohol-related crime, and social responsibility relating to the sale of alcohol.

Cathie Smith, Director of BIIAB, is heartened by the take-up and said, 'BIIAB launched the ARAR as we believed that to operate in a socially

responsible manner all staff selling and serving alcohol need to be aware of their important personal responsibilities'.

She added, 'The licensed retail sector is increasingly being asked to prove it is socially responsible. We know BII members operate in this way but more frontline staff, regardless of whether they hold a personal license or not, need to be aware of the law and how to sell alcohol within it.'

For more information on the ARA, visit www.biiab.org



Worldwide server training

Alcohol Focus Scotland's ServeWise server training programme has won a bid to develop a Responsible Hospitality training toolkit for use throughout the world. The toolkit is part of a joint project between the International Centre for Alcohol Policies (ICAP) and the European Forum for Responsible Drinking (EFRD), which aims to promote and improve standards in serving alcohol.

The toolkit will include two companion workbooks, one for servers and one for potential trainers. It will be developed over the summer of 2006 and will be tested by ICAP and EFRD in the autumn of 2006.

Study finds no support for claims that alcohol industry targets youth

A study by Jon Nelson, professor emeritus of economics at Pennsylvania State University, finds no economic evidence that the alcohol beverage industry targets youth in its magazine ads, as alleged by critics. 'Results from analyzing magazine characteristics and readership demographics show significant effects for advertisement price, audience size and adult demographics in magazine alcohol ads, but fail to support claims of targeting youth,' said the study author.

Dr. Nelson reviewed alcohol ads in 28 magazines in 2001-2003 and analyzed them by demographics: the percentage of youth readers, adult median age, adult median real income, and percentage of adult male readers, and by magazine characteristics: circulation, single copy sales, content category, annual number of issues, and advertisement cost per thousand readers. Alcohol advertising includes beer, wine and spirits. The 28

magazines studied in the two year period contained a total of 3,675 alcohol ads, including 652 beer ads, 118 wine ads, and 2,905 distilled spirits ads. For 14 of the 28 magazines, the percentage of youth readers equaled or exceeded 20%. Four magazines in the study are among the most widely read magazines among teens.

The study found that beer advertisers favour magazines with more young adults, male readers and larger adult audiences, but not teens. 'Spirits producers prefer magazines with more young adults, male readers and larger adult audiences but not teens; they also favour magazines with lower costs per advertisement.' Dr Nelson commented. '...automobile magazines have the highest average percentage of youth readership, although the number of alcohol ads in this category is quite small. Entertainment and music magazines have the second highest percentage of youth readers, the lowest mean adult age and a large

number of alcohol ads,' he added. However, the study notes that the young adult population (ages 21-34) is 50% larger than the underage youth population (ages 12-20).

The alcohol industry targets young adults through magazine ads because young adults drink more alcohol than older adults and have not yet established brand loyalties. Nelson's analysis found that alcohol advertisers have the strongest preference for men's style and sports magazines, followed by entertainment and music magazines. Advertising decisions are influenced more by the size of the adult audience and the price charged for an ad placement, rather than the size of the youth readership.

Source: Nelson JP et al. Alcohol Advertising in Magazines: Do Beer, Wine, and Spirits Ads Target Youth? Contemporary Economic Policy. Contemp Econ(Policy 2006;24:357-69).

AIM - Alcohol in Moderation was founded in 1991 as an independent organisation whose role is to communicate 'The Sensible Drinking Message' and to act as a conduit for information from the industry, its associations and relevant medical and scientific researchers, legislation, policy and campaigns.

AIM Mission Statement

- To promote the sensible and responsible consumption of alcohol
- To encourage informed debate on alcohol issues
- To communicate and publicise relevant medical and scientific research in a clear and concise format via AIM Digest and the AIM Research Highlights
- To publish information via the 'AIM Gateway to Responsible Drinking and Health' on moderate drinking and health - comprehensively indexed and fully searchable without charge
- To communicate with consumers on responsible drinking and health via www.drinkingandyou.com and via publications based on national government guidelines
- To distribute AIM Digest without charge to the media, legislators and researchers involved in alcohol affairs
- To direct enquiries from the media and others towards full and accurate sources of information.

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Alcohol abuse can jeopardise transplants

German researchers have recently reported on a study exploring the effects of heavy alcohol consumption on the body's immune system. Previous studies have shown that chronic alcoholics have an increased risk of infection following surgery. Transplantation centres generally insist that alcoholics abstain from alcohol for at least six months before an operation because alcohol abuse interferes with the immune system, rendering the body more prone to infection. However, this study found that even individuals who had not consumed alcohol for several years still had an abnormal immune response making them vulnerable to infections, including potentially life-threatening conditions.

The researchers compared 9 patients with Alcoholic liver disease (ALD) and 8 patients with Virus induced cirrhosis (VIC) who were scheduled for liver

grafting. A test was used in which a particular hormone was injected into the patients' bloodstream, triggering a response to simulate that of surgical stress. The levels of various substances associated with the immune response were then measured, in order to evaluate the immune systems effectiveness.

The results showed that so-called immune reactivity was suppressed to a significantly greater degree in the patients with ALD than in those with VIC. This was despite the fact that the former group had abstained from alcohol for an average of three and a half years. In line with the outcome of the tests on the immune system, the rate of infections had been far higher in the ALD patients than in the VIC patients over the previous year – 67% compared with 13%. Two of the alcoholic group also developed potentially serious virus infections after surgery.

“These results suggest a persistently altered stress response despite long-term abstinence, which may be a relevant pathomechanism for the increased preoperative infection rate in ALD patients during the preceding year,” the authors conclude. “An altered stress response with an enhanced infection rate is well known among patients with actual alcohol-use disorders, but to the best of our knowledge it has not been reported that patients are still affected after such a long abstinence time.

“The consequences (of high intake of alcohol) include an infection rate after (liver transplant) surgery that is two and a half times higher in alcohol abusers than in teetotallers.”

Source: Immune Reactivity is More Suppressed in Patients with Alcoholic Liver Disease than in Patients with Virus-Induced Cirrhosis after CRH Stimulation, *Alcoholism: Clinical and Experimental Research* (2006), 30, 140-149

Higher prevalence of systemic hypertension among moderate alcohol drinkers: an exploration of the role of under reporting

Heavy alcohol drinking is associated with increased prevalence of systemic hypertension (HTN), but the relationship between moderate drinking and HTN remains unclear. This paper by AL Kaltsky et al. explored the possible role of under reporting among moderate drinkers.

In a cross-sectional analysis of 105,378 persons, the researchers defined a subset among persons reporting three or fewer drinks per day that was likely to include a disproportionate number of under reporters. This subset included persons who, on another occasion, indicated intake of three or more drinks per day or who ever had a diagnosis of an alcohol-related condition; these persons are called “positive.” Persons who never reported three or more drinks per day and who

had no alcohol-related diagnosis were called “negative.”

Logistic regression models estimated the odds ratios (ORs) for prevalent HTN (140/90 mm Hg or greater) in the positive and negative subgroups, compared with lifelong abstainers as referent. All persons and four race-gender groups were studied, and they were controlled for age, education, smoking, and body mass index. We also studied the relationship of blood liver transaminase enzyme levels in the positive and negative subgroups at specific alcohol intake strata.

For persons reporting one to two drinks per day, the OR (95% confidence interval) of HTN was 1.32 (1.21-1.43) for positive persons and 1.16 (1.09-1.25) for negative persons.

For those reporting less than one drink per day, the ORs were 0.97 (0.89-1.06) for positives and 0.92 (0.87-0.98) for negatives. For those reporting one to two drinks per day, positive/negative comparisons showed approximately a 75% increased prevalence of high liver transaminase enzymes. For those reporting less than one drink per day, the positive/negative difference was approximately 30%.

The authors conclude that in the data, increased prevalence of HTN among persons reporting one to two drinks per day appears to be partially due to underreporting of alcohol intake.

Source: Higher prevalence of systemic hypertension among moderate alcohol drinkers: an exploration of the role of underreporting. Kaltsky AL, Gunderson EP, Kipp H, Udaltsova N, Friedman GD *Alcohol* 67: 421-428, 2006.

Alcohol and decision making

The results of a study conducted by Professor Dominic Abrams et al at the University of Kent, indicate that with moderate social drinking, groups may provide an informal means of mutual regulation and monitoring that can offset some aspects of 'alcohol myopia'.

Professor Abrams explained: 'Until now, research on the effects of alcohol has focused largely on individuals. For example, as a result of drinking alcohol, individuals are more likely to be sexually irresponsible, aggressive or emotional. However, drinking within groups is a ubiquitous part of our modern social setting. It is not uncommon for people to make decisions as part of a group while consuming moderate amounts of alcohol - for example, in business meetings or at conferences'.

To investigate how alcohol and group versus individual decision making combine to affect risk attraction, the investigators asked participants who were alone or in four-person groups to indicate their attraction to a

particular or perceived risk, after they had consumed either a placebo or alcohol.

Previous research shows that individuals become more risky after drinking alcohol, but this study found that people in groups did not. Indeed it seemed that groups may have been more careful about their decisions to offset the effects of the alcohol, contrary to people's stereotypes that when people drink in groups they become more unruly.

Tim Hopthrow fellow researcher added: 'The evidence from our research demonstrates that the effects of alcohol differ for groups and individuals and, in certain contexts, may differ from people's intuitive assumptions about alcohol and its potentially negative effects, a finding that is both novel and important for the way drinking is managed as a part of social and working life.'

Source: Abrams, D., Hopthrow, T., Hulbert, L.G., & Frings, D. (In Press). The social context of Alcohol Consumption: Risk Preferences Alone and in Groups, *Journal of Studies on Alcohol*.

Sleep hormone in wine

Scientists in Italy say they have discovered that the grapes used to make some of the most popular red wines contain high levels of the sleep hormone melatonin. Melatonin is naturally secreted by the pineal gland in the brain, especially at night. It tells the body when it is time to sleep.

The discovery of melatonin in grape skin could explain why many people drink wine in the evening to relax. 'The melatonin content in wine could help regulate the circadian rhythm [sleep-wake patterns], just like the melatonin produced by the pineal gland in mammals,' says researcher Iriti Marcello at the University of Milan.

Until recently, melatonin was thought to be exclusively produced by mammals but has recently been discovered in plants. It is thought to have antioxidant properties. Iriti's study discovered high levels of melatonin in Nebbolo, Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, Sangiovese and Croatina grape varieties. Iriti's team have also shown that melatonin content can be enhanced in grapes by treating vines with a plant vaccine Benzothiadiazole.

Source: Iriti M et al. Melatonin content in grape: myth or panacea? *Journal of the Science of Food and Agriculture* 2006.

Alcohol users with hepatitis often untreated

Patients who are infected with Hepatitis C virus (HCV) and who drink alcohol are often considered ineligible for anti-HCV drug treatment. However, recent research has found that alcohol drinkers have responses that are comparable to non-drinkers.

Dr. Bhupinder S. Anand, of the Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center, Houston, and colleagues examined the impact of alcohol use on HCV treatment outcomes. Their study involved 4,061 subjects, 726 of whom received treatment for HCV.

The investigators found that subjects who reported using alcohol were more likely to discontinue anti-HCV treatment and had lower response rates to anti-HCV treatment.

However, alcohol drinkers who stuck with their anti-HCV medication had response rates comparable to that of nondrinkers.

'Our observations are clinically important because they indicate that alcohol use should not be considered an exclusion criterion when evaluating patients for anti-HCV treatment, especially in view of the fact that nearly one third of patients with HCV infection have a history of recent alcohol use,' note investigators in the journal *Gastroenterology*. 'Patients with a history of alcohol use should not be excluded from HCV therapy.' Instead, they should be given additional support to ensure they complete treatment. The team concludes 'The current attitude among physicians against offering treatment to patients who use alcohol should be reassessed'.

Source: Anand BS et al. Alcohol Use and Treatment of Hepatitis C Virus: Results of a National Multicenter Study *Gastroenterology* 2006;130:1607-16.

Drinking coffee may be related to a reduced risk of developing the liver disease alcoholic cirrhosis

A minority of persons at risk develop liver cirrhosis, but knowledge of risk modulators is sparse. Several reports suggest that coffee drinking is associated with lower cirrhosis risk.

Arthur L. Klatsky, M.D., and colleagues at the Kaiser Permanente Medical Care Program, Oakland, Calif., analyzed data from 125,580 individuals (55,247 men and 70,333 women) without liver disease when they had baseline examinations, between 1978 and 1985. Participants filled out a questionnaire to provide information about how much alcohol, coffee and tea they drank per day during the past year. Some of the individuals also had their blood tested for levels of certain liver enzymes; the enzymes are released into the

bloodstream when the liver is diseased or damaged.

By the end of 2001, 330 participants had been diagnosed with cirrhosis, including 199 with alcoholic cirrhosis. For each cup of coffee they drank per day, participants were 22% less likely to develop alcoholic cirrhosis. Drinking coffee was also associated with a slight reduction in risk for other types of cirrhosis. Among those who had their blood drawn, liver enzyme levels were higher among individuals who drank more alcohol, indicating liver disease or damage; however, those who drank both alcohol and coffee had lower levels than those who drank alcohol but did not drink coffee, with the strongest link among the heaviest drinkers. Tea drinking was not related

to reduced risk in the study, suggesting that it is not caffeine that is responsible for the relationship between coffee and reduced cirrhosis risk

The findings do not suggest that physicians prescribe coffee to prevent alcoholic cirrhosis, the authors stress. Rather, basic research about hepatic coffee-ethanol interactions is warranted. Coffee might represent only one of a number of potential cirrhosis risk modulators.

Source: Coffee, Cirrhosis, and Transaminase Enzymes - Arch Intern Med. 2006;166:1190-1195. Arthur L. Klatsky, MD; Cynthia Morton, MD; Natalia Udaltsova, PhD; Gary D. Friedman, MD

Energy drinks and alcohol make dangerous equation

Experts from Purdue University, Indiana are warning that a new form of alcoholic beverage combining spirits with energy-like drinks may pose a health risk.

'The reason why people are attracted to [these drinks] is they are always trying to combat the effects of alcohol,' said Julia Chester, professor of psychological sciences. 'They want the euphoric effects of alcohol without the sedative effects; that is why the market is playing up these kind of drinks.'

However, effects on the body can actually intensify a hangover rather than avoid it. Tammy Loew, health advocacy coordinator for the student wellness office, said the alcoholic energy drinks give people a false sense of security. 'When you combine these

your body is less likely to tell you when you're tired or you've had too much to drink,' said Loew. Consumers are potentially at risk because they think they are going to be able to have less side effects by drinking something which combines an energy drink with alcohol, she added.

Loew commented that the products have side effects that are related to dehydration. Both alcohol and caffeine cause dehydration, so combining the two will magnify the effect. While students may think that alcoholic energy drinks will deter a hangover, Loew says this is not the case. 'When you combine a stimulant and depressant your blood alcohol level is still going to be the same,' said Loew. 'So research says: no you will have a hangover.'

An Open Meeting

Acetaldehyde - Related Pathology: Bridging the Trans-disciplinary divide

organized by the Novartis Foundation in collaboration with

The Royal Society of Medicine and The Physiological Society

to be held at King's College London, Franklin Wilkins Building, Waterloo, London SE1

Friday 8 September 2006

For programme information and to register for the meeting please visit www.rsm.ac.uk/academ/a10-acetal.htm

Moderate Alcohol Intake and Mental Function In Older Women

Research involving more than 7,000 older women found that those who drink a moderate amount of alcohol have slightly higher levels of mental function than non-drinkers, particularly in verbal abilities, according to researchers at Wake Forest University Baptist Medical Center and colleagues.

“Our research confirms other studies suggesting that for older women who choose to drink — and are not restricted from drinking for medical reasons — moderate alcohol intake is

not harmful for cognition and may provide some mental benefits,” said Mark Espeland, Ph.D., lead author.

The study found that compared to non-drinkers, women who reported drinking up to two or three drinks per day performed better on measure of global cognitive function, which includes concentration, language, memory and abstract reasoning. The women were strongest in verbal skills: those who reported having at least one drink a day did better on vocabulary tests and on a word fluency test.

Espeland said that understanding whether alcohol affects specific areas of cognition may shed light on the mechanisms that makes it protective. Possible mechanisms include that alcohol increases levels of “good” cholesterol and lowers the risk of stroke, that it may decrease the formation of plaque that is associated with Alzheimer’s disease and that it may increase the release of brain chemicals that affect learning and memory.

Source: Espeland MA et al, *Neuroepidemiology* 2006; 27: 1-12

Healthy lifestyle reduces women’s stroke risk

Women who are non-smokers, exercise regularly, have a healthy diet, including moderate alcohol consumption, and otherwise live a healthy lifestyle may have a reduced risk of stroke, according to a recent report.

There are two main types of stroke: ischemic, the more common type, in which a blocked artery causes a lack of blood flow to the brain; and hemorrhagic, which occurs when a ruptured blood vessel causes blood to leak into the brain. Several individual risk factors, including smoking, exercise and body mass index (BMI), have been linked to stroke. However, researchers have not previously examined how the combination of these behaviors may contribute to stroke.

The researchers studied the association between healthy lifestyles and stroke risk in 37,636 women age 45 years or older. At the beginning of the study, in 1993, the women answered questions about their smoking habits, alcohol consumption, diet, exercise routine and body mass index. From their responses, the researchers gave each woman a health index score that ranged from zero to 20, with a higher score indicating a healthier lifestyle. Healthy behaviour was defined as never smoking, consuming four to 10.5 alcoholic drinks per week, exercising four or more times per week, having a body mass index of less than 22 and maintaining a healthy diet. This included consuming high levels of cereal fibre, folate and omega-3 fatty acids, a high ratio of

polyunsaturated to saturated fat and low levels of trans fat and glycemic load.

During an average of 10 years of follow-up, 450 women had strokes; 356 were ischemic, 90 were hemorrhagic and four were undefined. The 4.7% of women with 17 to 20 health index points had a significantly lower risk of stroke overall and of ischemic stroke specifically than women with zero to four health index points. This association remained significant even when the researchers considered some of the common consequences of unhealthy lifestyles, including high blood pressure, diabetes and high cholesterol.

Source: Kurth T et al. *Healthy Lifestyle and the Risk of Stroke in Women*. *Arch Intern Med* 2006;166:1403-9.

Age at Drinking Onset and Alcohol Dependence

Youths who start drinking alcohol before 14 years of age have a 78% higher risk of having an alcohol problem in later years compared with people who start when they are at least 21, say researchers from Boston University School of Public Health, USA.

The researchers found that the earlier the drinking started before the age of 21, the higher the risk, year-by-year, of alcoholism later in life.

Ralph W. Hingson and team looked at information from interviews with 43,000 Americans aged over 18 from the National Epidemiologic Survey on Alcohol and Related Conditions, 2002 - 2002. Of the people interviewed, 4% were alcoholics when the interview took place while over 12% had had an alcohol dependency problem at some time. The data relied on interviewees trying to remember how old they were when they first started drinking.

Of concern was data that indicated that those who started drinking alcohol at 14 or younger had a much higher chance of becoming alcoholics within ten years of their first drink. The risk was there regardless of sex, race, educational level, marital status, socioeconomic level, antisocial behaviour history and smoking patterns.

Source: ‘Age at Drinking Onset and Alcohol Dependence’ *Age at Onset, Duration, and Severity*. *Arch Pediatr Adolesc Med.* 2006;160:739-746.

Alan Crozier to join AIM council



AIM is pleased to announce that Professor Alan Crozier is to join the AIM Social, Scientific and Medical Council.

Alan Crozier is Professor of Plant Biochemistry and Human Nutrition

at the University of Glasgow. He has published more than 200 research papers and his research is currently focussed on flavonols and other protective dietary flavonoids in fruits, vegetables and beverages. His research group is using a number of approaches to investigate the bioavailability of dietary phenolics, principally those occurring in berries, red wine, tea and coffee.

In 1999, he was awarded the title “Eminent Scientist of RIKEN” for internationally distinguished achievements in the field of plant hormones and secondary metabolites by the Institute of Physical and Chemical Research (RIKEN), Wako-shi, Saitama, Japan.

ICAP - Alcohol Taxation

ICAP has released its 18th ICAP report on Alcohol Taxation. Issues discussed are reasons for taxation, the public health perspective and industry views. Alcohol ‘equivalence’ is discussed as are policy considerations and the impact of taxation on misuse and problem behaviour.

The report makes suggestions as to how taxation can be used to target groups prone to risky behaviour such as young people, heavy drinkers and impaired drivers. There is a useful table of comparative excise and sales taxes by region on country. It is a brief summary of the subject.

Copies can be downloaded via www.icap.org

Health gaps in the wider Europe: 10 health questions about the EU's neighbours

The World Health Organisation Europe Region has released a book that provides information on the health gaps of Eastern European countries, in order to support Member States to improve the health of the population. Europe is not uniform with regard to health and health status. Besides, health systems vary significantly between countries and these disparities are not always well recognised.

At the same time, abundant health data and health systems knowledge do exist, and comparing them across borders helps national health policy makers and the international community to get a broader and more accurate picture of how health in the wider Europe varies. For each country, the WHO reviews the demographic data, the main disease burden, the risk factors, the actors, the service provision, resources, financing system and reforms.

Entitled “Health gaps in the wider Europe: 10 health questions about the EU's neighbours”, it was officially launched on the 22 June 2006 by the WHO and the United Nations Regional Information Centre (UNRIC) in Brussels.

Dr. Marc Danzon, WHO Regional Director for Europe, focused its intervention about the political dimensions of the health gaps in the wider Europe. He mentioned that the WHO aims to strengthen the health systems.

Dr. Nata Menabde, WHO/Europe, Deputy Regional Director, described some of the results of the report. There are major differences in the health status of people living in the European Region according to existing data, collected by WHO. However, some common features can be identified: HIV/AIDS prevalence, high level of smoking, cardio-vascular diseases, mental ill health, respiratory diseases and rise of tuberculosis.

Healthcare systems were also portrayed as weak.

Josep Figueras, Director, European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies, presented the differences between national health systems (ie financing, health insurance systems, continuum of care, investment in public health, stewardship of the ministry of health)

The final discussions, moderated by Jan Fischer, Deputy Director, UNRIC, tackled: the need to include civil society and health NGOs among health stakeholders; the need to collect comparable to from national levels; the importance of quality medical education; the existing in-country differences in the health status of immigrants and ethnic minorities; Health inequalities; Health care professional mobility.

The book is not available online yet but can be requested at publicationrequests@euro.who.int

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The Beer Wine And Spirits Council Of New Zealand

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California Association Of Winegrape Growers

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Lodi-Woodridge Winegrape Commission

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