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Annual Subscription to AIM:

GBP £ 600-
USD \$1,200-
Euro 900-

Corporate Subscription Levels:

Silver GBP 1,500-
USD \$3,000-
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Published by: AIM Digest,
PO Box 2282, BATH, BA1 2QY.

Australia

The tax on the ready to drink category rose by 70% in Australia in April. Concerned by the rise in young women's drinking in the country, the government has put up tax on the pre-mixed drinks by up to A\$1.30 [60p] a bottle. Health minister Nicola Roxon said: "We've got research showing that young people are price sensitive and, if that means this is a deterrent, then this will be a really successful measure."

Tasmania

The Minister for Health and Human Services, Lara Giddings, opened the Tasmania's first 'Annual Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs Council Conference' on 28th April 2008. She announced the intention to develop an Alcohol Action Plan (AAP) for Tasmania.

The AAP will be developed as part of a Government framework, taking into account the National Alcohol Strategy. It will include specific strategies to address alcohol consumption and binge drinking, particularly among young people.

Ms Giddings said that over the next few months her Department would hold workshops with key stakeholders from both government and non government community sector services to develop a future directions plan for the alcohol, tobacco and other drugs sector in Tasmania.

Alaska

Under House Bill 75 approved in April by the Alaska Legislature, State residents will have to renew their driver's licenses after they turn 21 and pass an eight-question test about drugs and alcohol and how they relate to driving. The bill has the support of the Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV), the Department of Public Safety, Mothers Against Drunk Driving, and the Alaska Cabaret, Hotel, Restaurant & Retailer's Association. The alcohol and drug awareness and safety test would be assembled by the DMV, and residents would be able to take it as many times as needed to pass. The bill would also create a "minor" driver's license to make it easier for alcohol vendors to identify underage customers.

US

"Heart Healthy" stickers are being displayed in the wine section at the Brattleboro Food Cooperative in Vermont.

The Food Coop is an organic and alternative products specialist. The small (1 x 4 inch, including a heart shape) "Heart Healthy" stickers are placed in all appropriate places throughout the store, including the wine section. Producers are not allowed to make health claims but retailers can, as long as they are fact based.

Dr Geoff Lowe joins AIM's Social, Scientific and Medical Council



AIM is honoured to welcome Dr Geoff Lowe to its prestigious Social, Scientific and Medical Council of nineteen members. Other members include professor R Curtis Ellison, Boston University School of Medicine, Alan Crozier, professor of Plant Biochemistry and Human Nutrition, University of Glasgow, Arthur Klatsky MD of the Kaiser Permanente Medical Center and Prof. Oliver James, Head of Medicine, University of Newcastle.

Dr Geoff Lowe is Honorary Senior Fellow in Clinical Psychology, at the Post-Graduate Medical School, University of Hull. He is a chartered health psychologist, with research interests mainly in the alcohol/drugs/ health areas. He has published over 200 research papers, many invited chapters, and a book: Adolescent Drinking and Family Life (Harwood Academic). He has also written for the media, particularly reports of relevant new studies in the areas of behavioural, social, and drug/alcohol research.

As a former member of the British Psychological Society Press Committee, he had special responsibility for selecting research articles from the Society's current journals and drafting media releases

for public dissemination. He also organised media briefings on significant psychological research areas.

Until recently he was joint editor (with Dr Bernard Dixon) of the Quarterly Review of Alcohol Research for The Portman Group, and was a long-term member of A.R.I.S.E. (Association for Research into the Science of Enjoyment). He has served on several alcohol, drug and health panels, including the WHO Programme on Youth Substance Abuse, and the Executive Committee, Hull & District Alcohol Advisory Service. He has recently been enlisted as an additional expert for the Science Group of the European Alcohol and Health Forum.

AIM websites welcome an average of 1000 visitors a day

Following the move of AIM's websites to a new server and the launch of the additional web address of www.alcoholinmoderation.com, AIM is welcoming an average of 1000 visitors a day to its nine websites in five languages. The new social and policy archive is proving very popular, where visitors can link straight into social aspect organisation, government or company initiatives that aim to educate sectors of the population, tackle drink drive or reduce under age consumption, for example.

A new area is being developed for www.drinkingandyou.com with teachers resources (linking to the excellent lesson plans and materials developed by EDcoms for www.talkaboutalcohol.com) and a specific parent's information area with increased material based on the European consumer web development by AIM for the

European Forum for Responsible Drinking. AIM will direct under age visitors to sites developed specifically for them where they exist.

The alcohol and health information for consumers is also being updated with an interactive human body which will be introduced for the UK, US and Canadian websites, whereby visitors can scroll over parts of the body and find out more about the risks and benefits of alcohol consumption. For more information contact alison.rees@aim-digest.com.

Unit Calculator

Wine (12%)	Beer (4%)	175ml (standard drink)
12%	1.5 units	2.1 units
14%	1.75 units	2.45 units

Government advice on sensible drinking for adults

Men: 24 units per day
Women: 16 units per day

What does sensible drinking mean?

Sensible drinking means consuming responsibly and moderately. It is about the quantity of alcohol consumed and the frequency of drinking, not the quantity of alcohol consumed at one time.

AIM and the Wine and Spirit Education Trust to make social responsibility integral to all courses

The Wine and Spirit Education Trust and AIM are cooperating over the next year to make elements of social responsibility key to all levels for its students - both in the UK and Internationally. Elements will be introduced for the marketing and business of wine, for case studies and including specific chapters introduced into the course material, study packs and course providers materials. The WSET educates over 40,000 students a year internationally, making it an essential communicator regarding social responsibility for those working in the beverage alcohol business. For more information contact iharris@wset.global.com or helena.conibear@aim-digest.com

More on red wine's healthfulness By Harvey E. Finkel, M.D

Just before Christmas, 2001, the research group led by Roger Corder, Ph.D., at the William Harvey Research Institute in London stimulated a flurry of excitement by publishing a brief communication in *Nature* proposing an explanation of the French paradox and of the mechanism by which red wine reduces the risk of coronary heart disease, the major killer and disabler of the developed world.

I'll quote myself on the French paradox: "It demonstrated the association of red-wine consumption with reduction of death from heart attacks. Indolent, chubby, middle-aged and elderly Frenchmen, Gauloises ever dangling, nibbling on foie gras or Camembert, are less afflicted with coronary disease than exercising, lean, non-smoking Americans, because of the French habit of daily drinking of vin rouge."

Calling endothelin-1, a peptide (protein building block) produced in blood vessels, "crucial in the development of coronary atherosclerosis," the Corder group found that a component of red wine suppressed the elaboration of endothelin-1. Endothelin-1 is a powerful constrictor of blood vessels, thereby bad for their health. The prudent took note with interest, but hedged their bets. Corder, who qualified as a pharmacist in 1978, has pursued a career in research. He is now professor of experimental therapeutics. He and his colleagues published another brief communication in *Nature* in November, 2006, in which the previously unknown inhibitor of endothelin-1, and therefore of

coronary and other blood-vessel atherosclerosis, is identified as a group of polyphenols, procyanidins, mainly derived from grape seeds. They are also found in chocolate, apples, cranberries, and some other fruits, nuts, and spices.

They are almost absent from grape juice, except Concord. Pomegranates contain a different, but still beneficial, polyphenol.

Corder believes that procyanidins (which are not antioxidants) are the prime healthful components of wine, chiefly functioning by counteracting the adverse effects of endothelin-1. As supporting evidence, he cites the relatively high proportion of people surviving to advanced age in locales producing wines containing abundant procyanidins: parts of southwestern France, Sardinia, Crete, formerly Soviet Georgia. In his new book, *The Red Wine Diet* (Avery, 2007), he seems to disdain the widely accepted contributions to health of the antioxidant polyphenols, including resveratrol, and of alcohol, and scorns modern soft, fruity, "easy-to-drink" wines low in polyphenols, especially those low in procyanidins.

Some grape varieties are particular rich in procyanidins, for example, the tannat of southwestern France. (Maybe that's why I've always liked Madiran.) Vineyard features cited as favoring high procyanidin concentration include high altitude, infertile soil, mature vines, avoidance of excess water, long, slow ripening, optimal sun and heat, cool nights, low yield, sea breeze, fog. In the winery, there should be long skin and seed contact during fermentation, and minimization

of fining and filtering. Of course, much of this is simply a recipe for producing good wine. Man's manipulations can obliterate the effects of most of these.

Corder has concluded that the traditional winemaking preserved in the areas of high longevity, including the just-cited factors, is responsible for the long survivals, by means of the abundance of procyanidins.

The work of Corder's group is intriguing, but controversial. Neither methods of investigation nor the inferences drawn can be said at this stage to stand up unsupported as established science. And we have to account for the effects of alcohol and of the antioxidant polyphenols, both demonstrated as multifaceted enhancers of health. Once we are more certain of the role of the procyanidins, we can hope to integrate their actions into our still incomplete understanding of the formation of and protection from atherosclerotic disease of the coronaries and other arteries, not only with reference to drinking.

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Updated facts about the consumption of alcohol and its association with breast cancer

by Creina Stockley, Health and Regulatory Information manager, The Australian Wine Research Institute

Introduction

Worldwide, more than a million women are diagnosed with breast cancer every year, accounting for 10% of all new cancers and 23% of all female cancer cases. Breast cancer incidence rates vary considerably, with the highest rates in the developed countries and the lowest rates in developing countries (Cancer Research UK 2008). Breast cancer is the most common cancer in women in Australia, UK and the USA, where one in eight women will be diagnosed with breast cancer in Australia before the age of 85 (AIHW 2008), one in nine will be diagnosed at some stage in their life in the UK (UK Office for National Statistics 2007), and one in four will be diagnosed at some stage in their life in the USA (CDC 2007). Breast cancer incidence rates continue to increase with age, with the greatest rate of increase immediately prior to the menopause.

An association between alcohol consumption and breast cancer

The first purported positive association between alcohol consumption and breast cancer was reported in 1977 (Williams and Horm 1977), and since then approximately 100 epidemiological studies have been published, which consistently support such an association (Longnecker 1994, Key et al. 2006). This association has been observed for both pre- and post-menopausal women of all ages, and is observed to be independent of the type of alcoholic beverage consumed (Rosenberg et al. 1993, Longnecker 1994, Bowlin et al. 1997, Hamajima et al. 2003, Petri et al. 2004, Key et al. 2006).

However, while the association is consistent and considered confirmed for consumers of three or more drinks per day (Rosenberg et al. 1993, Longnecker 1994, van den Brandt et al. 1995, Swanson et al. 1997), for consumers of one to two drinks per day, the data is less consistent or erratic, although the risk of breast cancer appears to increase with increasing consumption of alcohol (Hamajima et al. 2003). Indeed, it has been suggested that the relationship between alcohol consumption and breast cancer is linear (Bowlin et al. 1997, Smith-Warner et al. 1998, Thygesen et al. 2008) or increases monotonically (Ellison et al. 2001, Tjonneland et al. 2003, Thygesen et al. 2008) for the

average daily amount of alcohol consumed. It has also been suggested that consumption patterns may modify risk (Morch et al. 2007), such that the consumption of four to five drinks consumed per session may increase/double risk by 50% compared to only one drink consumed per session. Paradoxically, alcohol dependence does not increase the risk of breast cancer (Kuper 2000).

It has also been suggested, but not substantiated, that there is a positive relationship between the duration (and hence accumulated amount) of alcohol consumption over the lifespan of a woman and her risk of breast cancer, although age at commencement of alcohol consumption appears to be irrelevant (Longnecker et al. 1995a, 1995b, Bowlin et al. 1997, Swanson et al. 1997, Terry et al. 2006). Again it has been suggested but not substantiated that there is long latency between onset of alcohol consumption and onset of breast cancer of approximately 20 years (Willett and Stampfer 1997, Thygesen et al. 2008), although some studies conversely suggest that recent consumption is a better predictor of risk compared to retrospective consumption due to confounders such as aging, hormonal/menopausal status and body mass index (Ellison et al. 2001, Horn-Ross et al. 2004, McDonald et al. 2004, Tjonneland et al. 2004, 2007).

Risk factors for breast cancer and alcohol

The errancy of the data suggests that causation of breast cancer may be multi-factorial. The primary risk factors for breast cancer are purported to be: lifestyle; family history; medical history; reproductive history (such as early menarche, nulliparity and late menopause); endogenous/exogenous hormones (such as hormone replacement therapy); body mass index; and environmental exposure to carcinogens. It has been proposed that alcohol may modify the significance of these risk factors, and in particular, act additively with those risk factors that influence the concentration of hormones in plasma. It has also been proposed that the factors other than family history, may act additively with the family history risk factor, and also, that some of these risk factors may be limited to those women who have a positive family history of breast cancer (Gapstur et al. 1992, Horn-Ross et al. 2004). Consequently, it

has been proposed but not proven that the positive association between alcohol and breast cancer may be restricted primarily to women who have a positive family history of breast cancer (Vachon et al. 2001).

Potential interaction between steroid hormones and alcohol

Concerning the plasma concentration of the sex or steroid hormones as a risk factor for breast cancer, there is a positive association between the risk of development of breast cancer and the concentration of these hormones for both pre- and post-menopausal women; the steroid hormones include androgens, such as testosterone, and estrogens, such as estradiol, estrone and estriol (Brinton et al. 1986, Bergkvist et al. 1989, Colditz et al. 1990, Steinberg et al. 1991, Colditz et al. 1995, Dorgan et al. 2001, The Endogenous Hormones and Breast Cancer Collaborative Group 2002, Kaaks et al. 2005a,b, Eliassen et al. 2006). One source of endogenous estrogens is the aromatization of androgens to estrogens, and alcohol has been observed to increase this aromatization; the conversion occurs primarily in the ovary for pre-menopausal women and peripherally for post-menopausal women (Figure 1).

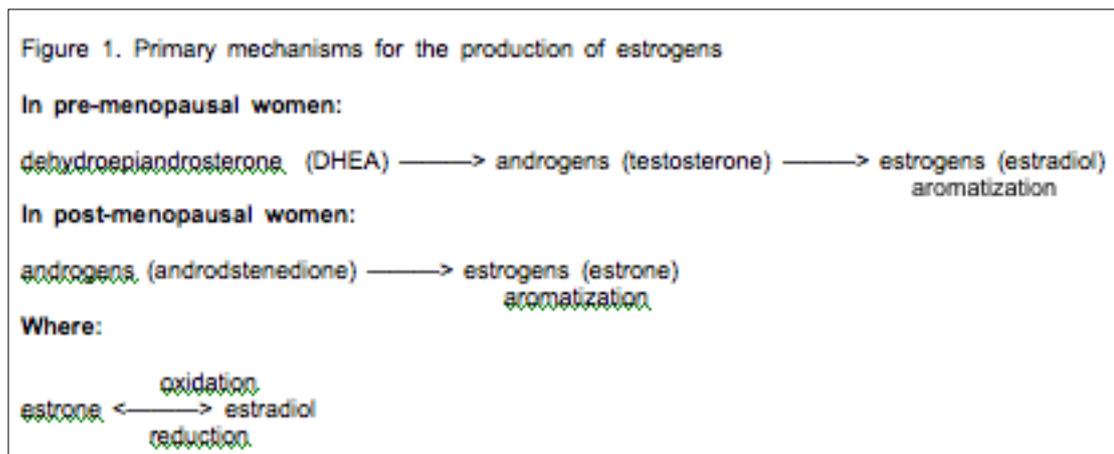
An elevated concentration of testosterone or estradiol may increase the risk of breast cancer approximately six- and five-fold, respectively (Dorgan 1994, 1996), where the risk may be proportional to concentration (The Endogenous Hormones and Breast Cancer Collaborative Group 2002). Indeed, Reichman et al. (1993) observed in pre-menopausal women that the concentration of DHEA sulfate, testosterone and estradiol increased across the menstrual cycle following the consumption of alcohol as did Muti et al. (1997) and Rinaldi et al. (2006). The increase in sulfated DHEA implies that alcohol may also increase the production of DHEA sulfate in the adrenal cortex through its effect

on the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal axis (Rivier 1996, Dorgan 2001). Gavaler and van Thiel (1992) and Rinaldi et al. 2006 reported similar observations in post-menopausal women and Hankinson et al. (1995, 1998) also reported an increase in the plasma concentration of estrone, which is purported to be a primary source of estradiol in breast cancer cells, following the consumption of alcohol. Furthermore, the effect of alcohol on the sex hormones is both acute and chronic.

The data shows also that there is a dose dependent response to alcohol on the aromatization of testosterone and on the subsequent concentration of estradiol in plasma, which then peaked and plateaued (Longnecker et al. 1995); this was consistent with the risk of breast cancer in consumers of alcohol compared to abstainers (Longnecker et al. 1988). Purported mechanisms by which alcohol may increase the concentration of steroid hormones include: stimulation of ovarian theca cells to produce androgens through increased pituitary luteinizing hormone secretion; induction of androgen catabolism in the liver; and/or increased liver aromatase activity leading to an increased conversion of androgens to estrogens.

The question remaining is at what level of moderate consumption the elevation of risk occurs, and then relative risk (risk benefit ratio) when compared with other causes of death, such as cardiovascular disease, which increases in post-menopausal women as a consequence of a reduced concentration of estradiol in plasma; estrogens significantly lower the concentration of cholesterol in plasma which is positively associated with a decreased risk of mortality from cardiovascular disease. For example, from a meta-analysis of 38 epidemiological studies by Longnecker in 1994, daily consumption of one alcoholic drink was associated

with an 11% (7 to 16%) increased risk of breast cancer compared with abstainers while from a subsequent meta-analysis of 53 studies by Clavel-Chapelom in 2002, daily consumption of one alcoholic drink was associated with only a 7.1% (5.5 to 8.7%)



increased risk. Furthermore, the pattern of alcohol consumption influences the concentration of the steroid hormones circulating in plasma, such that chronic and heavy intake of alcohol is observed to lead to early menopause, a lower concentration of gonadotrophins post-menopausally and an increased concentration of the steroid hormones post-menopausally (Gavaler and van Thiel 1987).

Potential interaction between hormone replacement therapy and alcohol

Post-menopausal women on estrogen replacement therapy (ERT) who consume alcohol are generally observed to have a significantly elevated plasma concentration of estradiol as compared with women not using ERT (Ginsberg et al. 1996 and Gavalar 1998). Ginsberg et al. (1996) observed an increase of approximately 300%, which corresponds to the preovulatory peak in the menstrual cycle, where the changes in the circulating concentration of estradiol significantly correlated with changes in the blood concentration of alcohol on both the ascending and descending limbs of the blood alcohol curve. The plasma concentration of this steroid hormone, which correlated with the plasma concentration of follicle stimulating hormone (FSH), is correlated with total amount of alcohol consumed per week (Gavalar 1998); interestingly Gavalar also observed an increase in the concentration of estrone. However, the interaction of alcohol and ERT is not simple as the dose-response relationship of ERT is inverse when a moderate amount of alcohol is consumed (Gavalar 1998).

Consequently, accumulating data suggests that alcohol consumption is most strongly associated with the risk of breast cancers that are hormonally responsive, such as lobular (5-10% of all cancers) and hormone receptor positive tumors (estrogen receptor positive (ER+), such as ER+PR+ and ER+PR- subtypes) (66%) (Enger et al. 1999, Li et al. 2003, Terry et al. 2006, Suzuki et al. 2008) as well as with the risk of tubular (2%) (Rosenberg et al. 2006); this is consistent with data suggesting that ERT is most strongly associated with lobular cancers (Li et al. 2000, 2008, Zanetti-Dallenbach et al. 2008). The suggestion of a further increased risk of breast cancer by post-menopausal woman who use ERT and who are also light to moderate consumers of alcohol remains controversial (Suzuki et al. 2005, Nielsen and Gronbaek 2008), in particular as ERT decreases the

risk of other diseases such as cardiovascular disease (Ross et al. 1981, Szklo et al. 1984, Stampfer et al. 1985), osteoporosis (Hutchinson et al 1979, Weiss et al. 1980, Paganini-Hill et al. 1981), and dementias such as Alzheimer's disease (Tang et al. 1996, Zuccala et al. 2001, Ganguli, et al. 2005, Stampfer et al. 2005, McDougall et al. 2006, Reid et al. 2006, Wright et al. 2006) and hence decreases the risk of death from all causes (Bush et al. 1983, Criqui et al. 1988, Thun et al. 1997).

Potential interaction between folate and alcohol

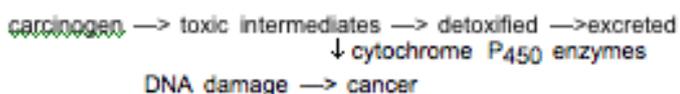
An adequate consumption of folate, however, may reduce the increased risk of breast cancer associated with alcohol consumption (Zhang et al. 1999, 2005, Rohan et al. 2000, Sellers et al. 2001, Baglietto et al. 2005, Stolzenberg-Solomon et al. 2006, Tjonneland et al. 2005, 2006). For example, while alcohol interferes with DNA synthesis and repair, folate is involved in DNA synthesis, repair and methylation. In animal models, folate supplementation reduces DNA strand breaks in the p53 gene (Kim et al. 2000); the P53 protein regulates the cell cycle to prevent genome mutation, and hence functions to suppress tumors. It can activate DNA repair proteins when it recognizes damaged DNA, hold the cell cycle at the G1/S regulation point on DNA damage recognition to prevent uncontrolled cell division and can initiate apoptosis, the programmed cell death, if the DNA damage proves to be irreparable. Cancer occurs when the rate of proliferation of mutated cells greatly exceeds the rate of apoptosis. In breast cancer, the gene has been observed to be mutated in 15 to 50% of tumors (Olivier and Hainaut 2001).

The concurrent consumption of alcohol and folate (at least 300 mg/day) has been observed to reduce the relative risk of alcohol-induced breast cancer to 1.05 for women consuming greater than 15 g alcohol/day or one and a half standard drinks, but was only 0.55 for women consuming greater than 600 mg/day of folate. Indeed, the concurrent consumption of folate-containing vitamin supplements reduces the relative risk to 0.74 for women consuming greater than 15 g alcohol/day compared to those not using vitamins (Zhang et al. 1999). The interaction between alcohol and folate has been observed to be primarily limited to estrogen receptor negative (ER-) breast cancer tumors (Zhu and Williams 1998, Sellers et al. 2002, Zhang et al 2005), which is consistent with an interaction

of alcohol and folate on breast tissue tumors being mainly through the primary metabolite of alcohol, acetaldehyde, which is directly carcinogenic as well as indirectly carcinogenic via folate depletion, independent of circulating estrogens and estrogen receptor-mediated events.

Other potential mechanisms of action for alcohol in breast cancer

Concerning biological or environmental exposure, alcohol is purported to influence the local and systemic metabolism of mammary carcinogens. Risk is the sum of numerous factors, each with a small risk, such that the summed risk is high from the enhancing or synergistic effects or influences of the risk factors. It is suggested that approximately 50% of breast cancer is not related to genetic/hormonal risk factors, but is related to the environment as observed from cultural/geographic correlations for risk. With respect to environmental exposure to carcinogens, metabolism in the body may either activate or detoxify the carcinogen. For example:



whereby, a decrease in or inhibition of metabolism, increases the exposure of the circulating carcinogen in the blood to organs/tissues, such as the breast.

Because alcohol is not itself genotoxic and nor tumorigenic in animals, potential mechanisms for the positive association between alcohol and breast cancer include the facilitation of carcinogens into cells, the induction of carcinogen activating enzymes, the inhibition of DNA repair and the promotion of tumors. Potential ubiquitous carcinogens include N-nitrosamines, to which people are exposed from sources such as tobacco and N-nitrosodimethylamine (NDMA). The former carcinogen is metabolized by cytochrome P450E1 enzymes in the liver, such that in the presence of alcohol, this metabolism is inhibited and the unmetabolized carcinogen circulates in the blood together with the alcohol. The coexposure of the carcinogen and alcohol to tissues has been observed to promote tumors in these tissues.

In addition, cytochrome P450E1 enzymes have been observed in animal breast tissue and there is

greater expression of these enzymes in breast tissue tumors compared to normal breast tissue, such that high concentration of circulating carcinogen may be activated by the cytochrome P450E1 enzymes and/or alcohol may induce the activation of these enzymes (Anderson et al. 1995). While these observations are yet to be confirmed in human breast tissue, the induction of cytochrome P450E1 is associated with an increased production of reactive oxygen species that are associated with DNA damage including single and double strand breakage (Wright et al. 1999, Koch et al. 2004), where breast tissue tumors contain an approximate nine-fold higher concentration of these DNA modifications (Li et al. 1999).

Alcohol may additionally influence alterations in cell cycle behaviour such as cell cycle duration leading to the hyperproliferation of mutated cells, that is, uncontrolled cell division; nutritional deficiencies, such as methyl-, vitamin E-, folate-, pyridoxal phosphate-, zinc- and selenium-deficiencies; and alterations of the immune system eventually resulting in an increased susceptibility to certain virus infections such as hepatitis B virus and hepatitis C virus (Poschl and Seitz 2004).

There is also accumulating data that the primary metabolite of alcohol, acetaldehyde, is partly responsible for alcohol-associated carcinogenesis. Acetaldehyde is directly carcinogenic and mutagenic interfering with both DNA synthesis and repair. It also binds to cellular proteins and DNA forming stable protein and DNA adducts, which result in physical and functional impairment of the cell and consequently in an immunological cascade reaction, and in the occurrence of replication errors and/or mutations in oncogenes or tumor suppressor genes (Dellarco 1988, Fang and Vaca 1995, Nakamura et al. 2003). Acetaldehyde also degrades folate in the colon, where a folate dietary deficiency has been associated with an increased risk of breast, pancreatic and colon cancer (Gloria et al. 1997, Duthie et al. 2000, Hussien et al. 2005).

Alcohol is metabolised to acetaldehyde by the enzyme alcohol dehydrogenase (ADH), where approximately 96-98% of ADH activity occurs in the liver but it also expressed and regulated by other tissues including breast tissue (Seitz et al. 1998, Wright et al. 1998, Triano et al. 2003). Individuals differ in their ability to metabolise alcohol because of genetic differences in ADH; ADH is encoded by at least five different genes that result in enzyme classes of different metabolic activity for alcohol

and hence concentration of circulating acetaldehyde (Bosron and Li 1986). For example, Class 1 ADH polypeptide subunits are encoded by three specific gene loci, ADH1A (α), ADH1B (β) and ADH1C (γ) where, in vitro, the (γ)-a polypeptide subunit encoded by the ADH1C*1 variant metabolises alcohol to acetaldehyde 2.5-times faster than the ADH1C*2 variant, and the beta-1 polypeptide subunit encoded by the ADH1B*2 variant metabolises alcohol to acetaldehyde 100-times faster than the subunits encoded by the ADH1B*1 variant.. Several studies have examined an association between the different polypeptide subunits and risk of breast cancer with conflicting and hence inconclusive results (Freudenheim et al. 1999, Hines et al. 2000, Lilla et al. 2005, Sturmer et al. 2005, Terry et al. 2006, Visvanathan et al. 2007) although results from relatively recent studies support an association between 'fast' metabolisers of alcohol per se and hence the 'fast' appearance of acetaldehyde and an increased risk of breast cancer (Terry et al. 2006), where women with the fast metabolising ADHC*1 variant and hence ADHC*1,1 genotype have been observed to be 1.8-times more at risk for breast cancer than women with other genotypes (Coutelle et al. 2004). Intriguingly, the expression of ADH1 in breast tissue is decreased in invasive breast cancers (Triano et al. 2003).

Although animal studies show that alcohol does not initiate or promote tumorogenesis and may actually decrease the incidence of tumors, some studies also show that alcohol may effect or enhance metastasising tumors (Weiss et al. 1995, Swanson et al. 1997), and that this effect is dependent on the stage of alcohol consumption, that is, pre- or post-treatment with a carcinogen, and on the amount of alcohol consumed. While it is unknown what stage of carcinogenesis is affected by alcohol, recent research implies that alcohol acts at a late stage of carcinogenesis (Weiss et al. 1995, Swanson et al. 1997).

Conclusions

While there is an indisputable association between alcohol consumption and the risk of breast cancer, the mechanisms behind the association require further elucidation. This risk of breast cancer should not, however, be considered in isolation from the risk of other factors for mortality, such as cardiovascular disease, whereby cardiovascular disease is the primary cause of mortality in the industrialised or westernised

world. Indeed, the light to moderate consumption of alcohol is associated with a significantly reduced risk of mortality from cardiovascular disease and from all causes, for both men and women, irrespective of age and ethnicity (Boffetta and Garfinkel 1990, Marmot and Brunner 1991). Thus, it may be advisable for women to enumerate and evaluate their risk factors for cardiovascular disease and for breast cancer, in addition to the amount and pattern of their alcohol consumption, before attempting to abstain from alcohol.

For a full set of references, please contact alison.rees@aim-digest.com

Red wine compound may kill pancreatic cancer cells

Resveratrol, found in the skin of grapes and in red wine may help induce pancreatic cancer cells to malfunction and die, a lab study has found.

In the new study, researchers at the University of Rochester Medical Center in New York treated human pancreatic cancer cells with resveratrol, either alone or in combination with radiation.

They found that the wine compound disrupted the activity of the cancer cells' mitochondria, energy-producing centers needed for cells to function. Resveratrol also impaired certain cancer-cell proteins that thwart chemotherapy by pumping drugs out of the cell.

In combination with radiation, but not alone, the compound bumped up the production of cell-damaging substances called reactive oxygen species, potentially making the cancer cells more destructible and cancer cells treated with the combination were more likely to self-destruct.

"While additional studies are needed, this research indicates that resveratrol has a promising future as part of the treatment for cancer," according to lead investigator Dr. Paul Okunieff.

The study used a relatively high dose of resveratrol, 50 micrograms per millilitre; the concentration found in red wine varies widely by type, but some wines have resveratrol levels as high as 30 micrograms per millilitre. It is still not known whether resveratrol from red wine would affect tumors in the body the same way it does cancer cells in a lab dish.

Source: *Advances in Experimental Medicine and Biology*, March 2008.

R. Curtis Ellison comments on new studies seeking the causes of Alzheimer's disease and other types of dementia

One of the most dreaded outcomes associated with ageing is Alzheimer's Disease and other types of dementia. Unfortunately, we know very little about what causes dementia. For a very small percentage of cases, especially those individuals who begin to show evidence of such a disorder at a younger age, a genetic linkage has been found. For the majority of cases, however, other than a previous stroke or serious head injury, underlying causes are not known.

While the detailed papers have not yet been published, there have been reports of two presentations at a recent scientific meeting of the American Academy of Neurology in Chicago that linked lifestyle factors to Alzheimer's Disease. In addition, a recent publication related long-term risk of dementia with the consumption of beer, wine, and spirits. These three studies are commented upon below:

(1) A study from Florida (presented at the neurology meeting by Dr. Ranjan Duara) identified heavy drinking (defined in this study as an average of more than 28 g/day of alcohol, or between 2 and 3 typical drinks of 10 to 12 grams), heavy smoking (20 or more cigarettes/day), and a genetic factor (a specific form of apolipoprotein E, or ApoE) as increasing the risk of Alzheimer's. People who were heavy drinkers, heavy smokers, and had the specific ApoE genotype were reported to develop Alzheimer's about 8 years earlier than those with none of these factors.

Unfortunately, no data are yet available on the pattern of drinking

of the subjects in this study. Thus, it is not known which subjects were binge drinkers (consuming all of their alcohol on one or two days per week) or were regular drinkers throughout the week. Most studies have shown that binge drinking is associated with more adverse health effects, while frequent, moderate intake has often been found to be associated with beneficial effects. Further, in the report of this presentation, the effects of more moderate drinking on the risk of dementia were not given. Until the paper is published, it will not be possible to judge if there were other associated lifestyle factors that may have "confounded" the reported relation.

(2) Another paper presented at the neurology meeting (by Dr. Alina Solomon of Finland and based on data from the large Kaiser Permanente health group in California) found that middle-aged men and women with levels of blood cholesterol above 200 mg/dL, especially those with values of 250 or higher, had an increased risk of developing Alzheimer's. A relation between high cholesterol has previously been seen in a number of other epidemiologic studies and has suggested to some that small degrees of atherosclerosis of the cerebral arteries (not enough to cause a recognizable stroke) may be a mechanism. Others suggest that the high levels of cholesterol are associated with higher degrees of inflammation, which may be the important factor. At this time, the reasons for the somewhat higher risk of dementia with higher cholesterol are not known.

(3) An important paper from Sweden (by Dr. Kirsten Mehlig and co-workers, recently published in the American Journal of Epidemiology) related alcohol intake to the subsequent development of dementia. In a long-term (34-year follow up) prospective study of women in Göteborg, Sweden, what was essentially the lifetime risk of dementia of the women was associated differently with wine consumption (a decrease in risk of dementia of 70%) and spirits consumption (an increase in dementia risk of about 50%); beer consumption had essentially no effect on the risk of dementia.

The authors concluded that the different associations by type of beverage suggest that the non-alcohol components in wine may be an important factor in lowering the risk of dementia, and some other studies have also suggested greater benefit from wine than from other beverages containing alcohol. While the investigators in the Swedish study adjusted for the usual risk factors for dementia, including education and social class, there is always the possibility that other lifestyle factors that were different between wine drinkers and spirits drinkers may have influenced the result.

Overall, these studies are beginning to identify some potential risk factors for dementia that, we hope, will lead to ways of preventing or reducing the risk of this dreaded disease.

The relationship between alcohol consumption and glycemic control among patients with diabetes

Little is known about the relationship between alcohol consumption and glycemic control among people with diabetes, state the authors of a recent study. The investigators carried out a follow-up survey in 1994-97 among 38,564 adult diabetes patients who were members of the Kaiser Permanente Northern California plan to evaluate the association between alcohol consumption and glycemic control. Self-reported alcohol consumption, and hemoglobin A1C (A1C), were assessed within 1 year of survey date. Linear regression of A1C by alcohol consumption was performed, adjusted for sociodemographic variables, clinical variables, and diabetes disease severity. Least squares means estimates were derived.

Results showed that in multivariate-adjusted models, mean A1C values were 8.88 (lifetime abstainers), 8.79 (former drinkers), 8.90 (<0.1 drink/day), 8.71 (0.1–0.9 drink/day), 8.51 (1–1.9 drinks/day), 8.39 (2–2.9 drinks/day), and 8.47 (≥ 3 drinks/day). Alcohol consumption was linearly ($p < 0.001$) and inversely ($p = 0.001$) associated with A1C among diabetes patients. The authors conclude that alcohol consumption is inversely associated with glycemic control among diabetes patients. This supports current clinical guidelines for moderate levels of alcohol consumption among diabetes patients. As glycemic control affects incidence of complications of diabetes, the lower A1C levels associated with moderate alcohol consumption may translate into lower risk for complications.

R Curtis Ellison comments: You may recall that a recent clinical trial (Shai et al, *Glycemic effects of moderate alcohol intake among patients with type 2 diabetes: A multi-center, randomized clinical intervention trial*. *Diabetes Care* 2007;30:3011-3016) showed that previously non-drinking diabetics advised to begin to consume a glass of wine daily had evidence over one year of lower fasting blood glucose levels than did subjects randomly assigned to continue abstinence. The present analysis based on more than 38,000 diabetics from the large Kaiser Permanente group shows that alcohol intake is associated with significantly lower levels of Hb A1C, a marker for prevailing level of blood glucose. A lower A1C level is a good indicator of better control of diabetes. The authors state that earlier research has shown that a 1% reduction in A1C is associated with a 21% reduction of the risk of any diabetes-related endpoint and a 37% reduction in the risk of microvascular complications. Thus, the magnitude of decrease in A1C levels associated with alcohol use (from 8.88 among lifetime abstainers to 8.39 for subjects reporting 2-2.9 drinks/day) may be an important factor in the reduction of cardiovascular disease among diabetics who are moderate drinkers.

Source: Ahmed AT, Karter AJ, Warton EM, Doan JU, Weisner CM. The relationship between alcohol consumption and glycemic control among patients with diabetes: The Kaiser Permanente Northern California Diabetes Registry. J Gen Intern Med 2008;23:275–282.

Quantity and frequency of drinking influence mortality risk

How much and how often people drink, not just the average amount of alcohol they consume over time, independently influence the risk of death from several causes, according to a new study by researchers at the National Institutes of Health (NIH). The message of little and often is reinforced as the most beneficial pattern of drinking.

Rosalind A. Breslow, and Barry I. Graubard, examined data from a nationwide health survey conducted in 1988. Almost half of the nearly 44,000 people who participated in the survey identified themselves as current drinkers who had at least 12 drinks of alcohol during the previous year. By the end of 2002, more than 2,500 of these individuals had died. Drs. Breslow and Graubard compared their causes of death with the alcohol consumption patterns they reported in the survey.

The researchers found that, in men, alcohol frequency and quantity had opposite effects on cardiovascular mortality. The greater the amount of alcohol that men consumed on drinking days, the greater was their risk for death from cardiovascular disease. For example, men who had five or more drinks on drinking days had a 30% greater risk for cardiovascular mortality than men who had just one drink per drinking day.

(continued p12 column 1)

Quantity and frequency of drinking influence mortality risk (continued from p11)

Alcohol quantity was also associated with increased mortality from cancer among men. On the other hand, frequency of drinking was associated with decreased risk for death from cardiovascular disease among men — those who reported drinking 120 to 365 days per year had about 20% lower cardiovascular mortality than men who drank just one to 36 days per year.

Dr Breslow commented that previous studies have linked moderate drinking with reduced risk for death from cardiovascular disease, while heavier drinking has been linked with increased mortality. Such studies have typically measured individuals' average alcohol intake. A drawback of that approach is that averaging obscures potential differences between people who sometimes drink heavily and those who consistently drink small amounts of alcohol.

Source: Rosalind A. Breslow and Barry I. Graubard Prospective Study of Alcohol Consumption in the United States: Quantity, Frequency, and Cause-Specific Mortality. *Alcoholism: Clinical and Experimental Research*, March 2008.

Wine and tea compounds linked to diabetes benefits

Antioxidant-rich red wine and tea could help regulate blood sugar levels in diabetics, suggests a new study from the University of Massachusetts.

Red wine and tea might inhibit the activity of alpha-glucosidase, an enzyme responsible for triggering the absorption of glucose by the small intestine according to the new laboratory study (in vitro). In addition the researchers report no effect on the activity of alpha-amylase, an enzyme responsible for starch metabolism, and an undesirable effect observed with some current medications used to control blood sugar.

The researchers took four random samples of red and white wine, and extracts from four types of tea (black, oolong, white and green teas). Laboratory tests focussed on the alpha-glucosidase enzyme, already used as a target for some current drugs used to treat type-2 diabetes, and tested the wines and tea extracts. The same concentration was also tested for alpha-amylase activity.

Results indicated that red wine inhibited alpha-glucosidase by almost 100%, while inhibition of the enzyme by white wines was only about 20%. A dose-dependent effect for the teas was observed, with black tea extracts possessing the highest level of inhibition

(over 90% at a concentration of 200 micrograms per millilitre), followed by white tea and oolong tea (87% and 80%, respectively). The researchers concluded that these effects were related to the concentration of polyphenolics.

“The major phenolic components of red wine are caffeic acid, coumaric acid, gallic acid and quercetin, and of tea are protocatechuic acid, caffeic acid, coumaric acid and gallic acid,” stated the researchers. “These phenolic compounds were linked to high alpha-glucosidase inhibitory activity,” they added.

Small or negligible effects on alpha-amylase activity were recorded by the researchers.

“It is clear that some wine and tea types have high antioxidant activity and good inhibitory profiles on carbohydrate-modulating enzymes related to glucose absorption in the intestine,” stated the researchers. “The potential for managing both glucose absorption and cellular redox dysfunction for preventing postprandial hyperglycemia linked to type 2 diabetes and hyperglycemia-induced vascular complications leading to hypertension can be designed in part through food systems, and provides the basis for clinical studies.”

Source: *Journal of Food Biochemistry* Volume 32, Number 1, Pages 15-31, “Inhibitory potential of wine and tea against alpha-amylase and alpha-glucosidase for management of hyperglycemia linked to type-2 diabetes” Authors: Y.-I. Kwon, E. Apostolidis, K. Shetty

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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The Wine and Spirit Trade Association conference

The WSTA social responsibility conference was held on 23rd April in London. The keynote address was made by Kevin Brennan MP Parliamentary under secretary for State for children, young people and families.

Kevin Brennan drew on figures regarding under age consumption of alcohol in the UK, recognising that although the number of children drinking is falling, those who are drinking are drinking more units and more often - what ever the statistics, he stated, the level of underage misuse of alcohol and its associated consequences is unacceptable as is the diversion of resources that could be better employed on teachers and nurses or facilities for young people. His objectives as regards children, are not only to reduce under age drinking, but to change the culture and attitude to alcohol by young people in the UK.

The Alcohol Harm Reduction policy, Safe. Social. Sensible has a public health agreement to improve outcomes for children and alcohol. The Youth Alcohol Action plan will also follow shortly with an aim to educate parents and promote a healthier culture and knowledge both at home and in school.

Brennan believes alcohol advertising has a strong influence on children and asked the industry to think about advert content accordingly. He also criticised the role of the media in championing hedonistic lifestyles. His department is committed to improving the environment for young people by funding leisure, culture and better, safer facilities

in the environment (£679 million funding) for teenagers. He believes the industry has an important role to play in changing cultural norms and influencing the drinking behaviour of consumers and together with local government and schools hopes all can engage to improve the attitude to alcohol in Britain.

Brennan thanked the industry for their valuable input in reducing misuse among the under age - for their active and committed role in reducing alcohol access to children - as regards the effective Challenge 21 policy for example and community level public private partnerships.

Jeremy Beadles gave an update on the current social and policy climate in the UK - with the issues facing the industry regarding rising costs, taxes and prices. He claimed there are no new alcohol strategies, just remixes of old ones, offering the same solutions. The association awaits the promotion, price and harm review being under taken by Sheffield University and due in July/ August this year - the review will include policy recommendations.

There is also an industry standards review under way looking at the effectiveness of self regulation. The main issue faced here, is how to tackle those selling, producing or marketing alcohol who do not embrace or sign up to the voluntary codes regulating the sector.

Beadles called for more education at all levels for consumers and the WSTA is working with Drink AWARE to producing POS on sensible drinking guidelines and units for use throughout retail in the UK.

Drink AWARE is again seeking a new Chief Executive following the departure of Jean Collingwood, which will further delay active programme delivery for England.

He also called for a comprehensive new drink drive campaign to help maintain the UK's reputation as having one of the lowest death rates per capita in the world. Beadles is concerned about Scotland's Alcohol policy which is moving towards penalising all drinkers in order to reduce misuse, rather than targeting misuse and specific groups of problem drinkers.

For more information, please visit www.wsta.co.uk

M&S welcomed as new subscribers

Marks and Spencer have made a very public commitment to social responsibility as a company with the publication of PLAN A. One of the plan's five 'pillars' the UK retailer has committed to is Health - with a pledge to help promote healthier lifestyles for both its staff and customers. Encouraging healthier lifestyles includes a commitment to promoting responsible drinking, within government daily drinking guidelines. M&S have joined AIM as part of the development of the Health 'pillar'.

The effect of the new “24 hour alcohol licensing law” on the incidence of facial trauma in London

A recent study assessed whether head and neck trauma secondary to alcohol-associated assaults had increased, decreased, or stayed the same since the introduction of the New Licensing act in 2005.

Data were collected from the Accident and Emergency Department, University College Hospital, attendance databases for two six-month periods: Nov 2004 - Apr 2005, and Nov 2005 - Apr 2006.

There were 1102 attendances for head and neck trauma secondary to alcohol-associated assaults during the six months before the introduction of the Licensing Act and 730 such attendances during the similar period after the introduction of the law, with fewer cases in each corresponding month during the later period.

There were more cases at weekends than on weekdays during both periods. There were fewer cases but

more at weekends in 2005–6 than in 2004–5 (423, 58% compared with 584, 53%, respectively).

The authors conclude that the Licensing Act seems to have reduced the number of attendances at the A&E department for head and neck trauma secondary to alcohol associated assaults.

Source: The effect of the new “24 hour alcohol licensing law” on the incidence of facial trauma in London. *British Journal of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery* (online April 2008).

UK motorists’ poll shows support for lowering drink-driving limit

A survey of Automobile Association (AA) members showed support for the UK drink-driving to be lowered to 50mg of alcohol per 100ml of blood, bringing the UK into line with the rest of Europe.

According to the poll of 17,500 drivers, two-thirds were in favour of lowering the limit, with more women than men choosing this option.

Edmund King, the AA president, warned that lowering the limit was unlikely to have a significant effect on drink-drive-related deaths, which totalled 540 in 2006.

“It’s not the entire answer to the problem of drink-driving. Many people are way over the limit and if we just lowered it, it would be no help at all in preventing those who are so far over,” said Mr King.

“There is probably a hardcore who have a drink problem rather than a drive problem.”

Drink-drive deaths have fallen steadily over recent decades and the UK has one of the lowest drink drive fatality rates per capita in the world, due to effective enforcement and respect for current laws.

The Department for Transport (DfT) is expected to publish a consultation paper on a drink-driving crackdown, including whether random breath tests should be introduced later this year. The Home Office is also working on a “drugalyser” project to identify drivers who drive whilst under the influence of drugs.

A spokesperson for the DfT said: “We are currently considering a range of options to further cut the toll of deaths on the roads, including looking at drink-driving. A consultation is planned for later this year.”

WKD website campaign criticised

The marketing of alcoholic beverages on websites and the images used has recently been highlighted as an issue due to the ‘Mugshots’ section of the WKD website which contravened the Portman Group Code of Practice on the Naming, Packaging and Promotion of Alcoholic Drinks.

The Independent complaints panel ruled that the website breached

four Code rules for its association with increased popularity; sexual success; immoderate consumption and for using images of people who appeared to be under 25.

David Poley, Portman Group Chief Executive, said: “With the growing popularity of websites, it is crucial that images shown are appropriate. It is common for companies to use pictures in promotional materials

of consumers enjoying their drink. But, in doing so, they should avoid showing anyone who may be drunk or looks under 25 and they must not imply that drinking makes people socially or sexually successful.

Beverage Brands moved quickly to change the website but the Panel’s decision has ramifications for the rest of the industry”.

New national website launched for Best Bar None

Best Bar None, the UK award scheme for responsibly run licensed premises, has launched its new national website at www.bestbarnone.com

This new website is part of the work undertaken by the new Best Bar None Board with the remit to expand the scheme across the UK whilst still maintaining the local focus which has made Best Bar None such a success so far.

The launch of the website heralds the first phase of the site which will enable any area wishing to adopt Best Bar None to access guidance and information from a dedicated source. The website also allows schemes to access template forms for assessors for use. People looking for local information will be able to find their local scheme via this site. There is also the opportunity to

take part in polls on current issues facing the licensed trade.

John McNamara, Chief Executive of Best Bar None, said, "It was very important to offer a dedicated Best Bar None information resource and this website brings all the information into one place. The plans for forums on the site will enable existing Best Bar None schemes to share their experiences and help build the scheme for the future...This website will have a variety of audiences from existing schemes to potential schemes to members of the public and it is essential that we meet these needs".



Alcohol on the London underground

Boris Johnson the Mayor of London plans to ban alcohol from the London Underground. The Conservative candidate believes the Tube must become a no-go area for drinkers.

Johnson commented: "I have been told time and again that people are scared of taking the Underground late at night because of aggressive behaviour by drunken yobs...too many people find themselves forced to sit opposite someone swigging from a can of lager and engaging in behaviour that is intimidating or worse. I want everyone's journeys to be safer and more pleasant."

Banning alcohol would require a simple amendment to the Tube's conditions of carriage specifying that the consumption of alcohol was prohibited, he said.

Home Office campaign takes alcohol away from underage drinkers

The results of a recent clampdown on underage public drinking have been released by the Home Office. Vernon Coaker Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Crime Reduction, announced that over 20,000 litres of alcohol had been confiscated in the recent half term campaign involving 39 police forces. The following findings were posted:

- 25% of the 5,143 youngsters who surrendered alcohol to the police said they were aged 15 or under
- 23,621 youngsters came into contact with the police when alcohol was confiscated

- 3,585 directions to leave were issued
- of the 30% who divulged where they had sourced their alcohol, half said they had bought it from a shop.

Mr Coaker commented:

'I know the public will welcome police action to disperse groups of threatening youths and choke their supply of alcohol. This campaign will not be the last.

I also want to remind parents of their responsibility and where poor parenting is identified as an issue I want to see greater use of parenting contracts to tackle persistent underage drinking. I also want to

see greater sharing of information between police and local agencies about repeat offenders to address problems as early as possible.

'Police officers tell me that these campaigns yield valuable intelligence about where children get their alcohol. With this in mind, I want to send a strong signal once again to those persistent few irresponsible retailers that deliberately sell to under-18s. They will be caught and they will be punished. I also want to congratulate all the officers involved in what was clearly a successful campaign for their hard work and dedication.'

Highest earners drink more in UK

The highest earners are the most likely to drink more than moderately, according to a UK report published by The Office for National Statistics in April. 51% of men being paid more than £1,000 a week exceed the Government's alcohol limits of 3-4 units a day and 47% of women on high incomes drink more than the recommended levels of 2-3 units of 8g.

Fewer than a third of men and only a fifth of women on £200 or less a week exceed the limits, the report for the said.

It added: "In general, the higher the level of income, the more likely men and women were to exceed to recommended guidelines."

44% of men in managerial or professional jobs are likely to drink over the recommended limits on a

regular basis – at least one day in a week. This compares to 35 out of 100 men in routine or manual occupations. Among women, 40% drink too much at least once a week compared with 26% in the routine and manual class. However, on average, those in managerial and professional jobs drink 15.1 units a week, well within sensible drinking guidelines and those in routine and manual occupations drink just 11.6 units a week on average.

The report, entitled 'Diversity and Different Experiences in the UK,' drew on calculations developed earlier this year on drinking habits among different income groups. For more information, please visit <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/cci/article.asp?ID=1976>

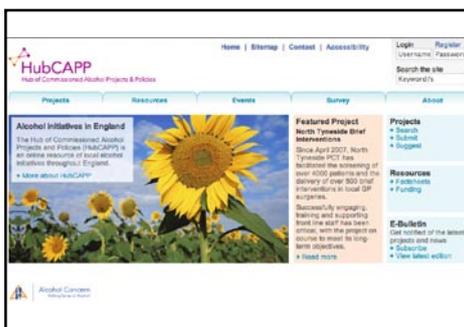
Online portal for local alcohol projects in UK

The Hub of Commissioned Alcohol Projects and Policies (HubCAPP) has been launched, offering a resource for commissioners and strategic project managers across England. The new online database provides key information on a comprehensive range of alcohol projects, policies and initiatives to help disseminate best practice and share key learnings. HubCAPP has been funded by the Department of Health and will be managed by Alcohol Concern.

Don Shenker, Chief Executive of Alcohol Concern commented:

'Alcohol professionals already have a fairly well developed library of guidance documents available to them. HubCAPP has the potential to make the development of new strategies a more dynamic and collaborative process than it has been before. We invite local partnerships to view the time spent submitting their own strategies as an investment. Not only will it help build a valuable mass of information, but it also presents a good opportunity to put some critical distance between them and the decisions they've taken to date'.

The Hub is available at <http://www.hubcapp.org.uk/>



A2om joins forces with Thames Valley Police

A2om, the UK's first university-affiliated driving academy, has joined forces with Thames Valley Police in developing a ground breaking 'Young Driver Scheme', an education scheme for drivers under 25 caught committing moving road traffic offences. The new scheme will heavily feature a2om's pioneering e-learning technology designed to re-educate and greatly improve the attitude of young drivers and young driving offenders.

Called 'A2om highway', it helps address key issues not usually covered in driver training. The course will use a PC interface element which requires students to respond to risky scenarios as they would in real driving situations, including night driving and different weather conditions.

Every year 1,000 people aged 16-18 are injured on Thames Valley roads and an average of 7 young people per week are killed or seriously injured. These figures are reflective of the type of journeys young drivers make which are often regarded as 'social events' by the participants and include peer pressure, thrill seeking, alcohol and drugs. The course will target crash causation factors where young drivers are over represented such as overtaking, poor hazard perception and poor safety margins.

Gary Austin, Chairman of A2om academy said 'These are exciting developments within the road safety and young driver arena and A2om is delighted to be working with Thames Valley Police who are so pioneering in this field'.

For more information visit www.A2om.com

Alcohol Concern - Alcohol Awareness Week April 7-14

As part of Alcohol awareness week, Alcohol Concern highlighted the need for greater investment in the alcohol treatment sector. They sought to raise public awareness of the long and short-term impact of alcohol misuse on people's lives, and the lives of their families and friends. They aimed to convince policy makers at both the national and local levels of the need to devote greater resources to alcohol treatment and spotlight the policy making process.

Alcohol Concern published two reports during Alcohol Awareness Week 'Keeping it in the family'

estimates that around one million children currently live with a parent who is alcohol dependent. Looking at a range of research and findings the document considers the serious impact of parental alcohol misuse including long term psychological damage and a range of other pressures put on children, such as being forced into taking the role of carers themselves. It argues that there are not enough services currently available to support young carers or alcohol dependent parents.

The second report entitled 'Has the emphasis on 'localism' really improved alcohol commissioning?' reveals differences across the country

in terms of the quality of services laid on to support the recovery of people who have become dependent on alcohol. The report's authors argue that the government's focus on 'binge' drinking means that health service managers are under pressure to put money into short interventions for people entering Accident and Emergency due to drunken mishaps rather, than more intensive treatment aimed at chronic drinkers. In some cases, local support was practically unavailable for anyone wanting professional help for chronic drinking.

For more information please visit <http://www.alcoholconcern.org.uk>

'Drop' in drink-fuelled violence in Glasgow

Community-based pilot projects aimed at cutting alcohol-related disorder have led to a 10% drop in violent crime in Glasgow, according to the report from the University of Bath.

The study examined projects in Glasgow, Birmingham and Cardiff from 2003.

It concluded measures, such as improved late night travel, had had a "considerable positive impact".

The initiatives were funded by the Alcohol Education and Research Council with the aim of bringing together different groups to tackle problems associated with alcohol-related harm and disorder.

Projects focussed on working with licensees, especially large premises, to tackle drunkenness and disorder.

Moves to improve street lighting, increase in the number of late night buses and introduce supervised taxi-ranks were also praised.

Evaluation of the projects by the Mental Health Research and Development Unit at the university found a 29% fall in "wounding" in Birmingham.

It also revealed a 25% reduction of alcohol-related incidents recorded at Accident and emergency departments in Cardiff.

Dr Willm Mistral, from the University of Bath, carried out the independent evaluation. He commented at the conference held at Bath University: "Despite the inherent difficulties in interpreting such a range of data, there can be no doubt the community partnerships have had a considerable positive impact on the local environment.

The increased public awareness, stronger relationships with the license trade, improved environments and better late night transport links have all brought benefits to the area."

For more details contact: w.mistral@bath.ac.uk

Ireland HSE publishes detailed review of alcohol consumption rates and related harms

The Health Service Executive (HSE), on 21st April, published a detailed review entitled 'Alcohol Related Harm in Ireland.'

The report provides an overview of recent studies into alcohol consumption, assesses the most up to date research into their effects and offers recommendations on how best to reduce the unhealthiest consequences.

Following four years of static alcohol consumption, in 2007 there was a slight rise of 2.7% per capita in individual alcohol consumption.

The report is available at http://www.hse.ie/eng/Publications/Hospitals/Alcohol_Related_Harm_in_Ireland.pdf

BBPA backs no-alcohol zones in Wales

Agencies are looking at ways to tackle the problem of drink-related anti-social behaviour in Wales. Local authorities have the power to create alcohol prohibition zones, while enforcement is down to the police. The British Beer and Pub Association says it is keen to see more alcohol-free zones.

Mark Hastings, director of communications at the BBPA, said: "There are a range of measures which police and local authorities can use...The creation of alcohol prohibition zones is a targeted way of ensuring that people are not drinking in streets and other areas in towns where people are known

to congregate causing either a low, or high level of disruption,... but these zones have to be used with care. For example you don't want to be banning perfectly law-abiding people from enjoying a drink with their picnic...What police and local authorities need to be doing is looking at ways of targeting particular groups of people in particular ways."

Mr Hastings added that he would like to see more action taken against youngsters who have illegally bought alcohol underage.

"There needs to be more of a debate around the prosecution of youngsters for buying alcohol illegally. The

police have had the powers to seize alcohol from youngsters who are drinking it underage. They have had those powers for 10 years. But it is only businesses who sell alcohol to children who are prosecuted," he said.

Welsh police forces are also backing the careful creation of more alcohol prohibition zones.

Acting Chief Constable Andrew Edwards, of Dyfed-Powys Police said: "Dyfed-Powys Police believes that prohibition zones can be useful when used as part of a wider strategy to deal with drunkenness and anti-social behaviour."

DARE2BDRINKAWARE awards ceremony

Dare2bDrinkAware is a competition for third-level students in Ireland, sponsored by drinkaware.ie and organised by the Digital Hub Development Agency. The aim of the competition is to highlight young people's attitudes to alcohol. 2008 marked the first year of the competition, which received a great response from third-level students. Results of the competition were announced at the awards ceremony on 17th April.

The team Pottor Productions won three out of five awards in the competition for their short film 'It's Funny, But It Also Makes You Think'. Their film takes a humorous look at how drunk people are perceived by those around them. It follows George a self-confessed ladies' man who finds that, lately, he is stumbling across more and more

incoherently drunk girls. From crying on his shoulder to mauling him and lunging drunkenly towards him on the dance floor, the film documents George's quirky observations on what girls who are drunk really look like to guys. It won prizes for best editing, best narrative and best overall film.

An entry from the National College of Art and Design (NCAD) won awards for best creative interpretation of the brief and best cinematography. NCAD student Liam Ward and Kelly Hyland produced 'The Wasted Youth'. Their film mixes scenes of natural beauty with shots filmed in an urban setting to demonstrate the contrast between beauty and the depression, isolation and aggression that can be triggered by alcohol consumption.

The concept of the film is that, when abused, alcohol can destroy the beauty of youth; obstruct self-awareness, and in cases of binge drinking, harm a person's health.

Fionnula Sheenan Chief Executive of MEAS, the organisation behind drinkaware.ie commented that 'We were absolutely thrilled with the response to Dare2bDrinkAware and we were really blown away by the quality of the films that were produced for the competition. Not only did they take imaginative approaches to portraying young people's attitudes to alcohol consumption, they were also highly accomplished from a technical point of view.

Further information about Dare2bDrinkAware is available from www.dare2bdrinkaware.com.

New measures to tackle binge drinking & public disorder in Ireland

Irish Prime Minister Mr Bertie Ahern and the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform, Mr Brian Lenihan announced new legislative measures to tackle the public order problems caused by binge drinking on 23rd April.

The draft legislation, the Intoxicating Liquor/Public Order Bill 2008, proposes the reform of both licensing law and public order legislation in response to recommendations contained in the Report of the Alcohol Advisory Group. Drafting of the Bill is at an advanced stage with a view to its enactment before the Oireachtas rises for the summer break.

Speaking at the launch, Ahern said: "The State has a key role to play in ensuring that licensing laws and public order legislation is adequate and effective. Parents too have an indispensable role. Nor should we overlook the importance of personal responsibility.

As a society, we need to take responsibility both collectively and individually in order to address the problems arising from excessive consumption of alcohol. We need to examine our acceptance of heavy drinking and the signal that this is sending, particularly to our young people.

Government has a clear responsibility to ensure that our laws and regulations are supportive of cultural change in this area. The draft Bill is a concrete example of the Government's determination to do its part in changing attitudes to alcohol consumption."

PRUK launches responsible drinking campaign



Pernod Ricard UK has launched a responsible drinking campaign called 'Accept Responsibility'. It will be delivered in three stages over the next twelve months, with the first phase targeting those drinking to get drunk.

The advertising is designed to encourage the public to reflect on their personal drinking choices by highlighting common excuses such as 'I need a few drinks to loosen up' or 'I can't have a good time without drinking'.

The responsible drinking advert will appear in the Sun, Daily Star, Metro, Daily Mirror and the Daily Record over the next four weeks. The combined adult readership of placing

the advertisement in these national daily newspapers is 14.5 million.

Consumers will also be reached through online banner advertising around portals and social networks including: Facebook, MSN and Yahoo. All advertising directs consumers to the Pernod Ricard UK dedicated responsible drinking website: www.acceptresponsibility.org.uk. This site provides consumers with information and insight on responsible drinking and links to other useful online resources.

Jean-Manuel Spriet, CEO, Pernod Ricard UK, said: "As one of the UK's leading players in the drinks industry, we are committed to promoting responsible drinking and reducing alcohol related harm. Here at PRUK, we fully accept responsibility for the role we have to play in this matter. But it is fair to say that our consumers also have a responsibility regarding how they behave when they drink."

IHRA publishes list of '50 best' documents on Alcohol Related Harm



The International Harm Reduction Association (IHRA) has posted 50 documents that provide what they consider the best information on the subject of alcohol harm reduction.

This project is the first major output from IHRA's new Global Alcohol Harm Reduction Network (GAHR-Net) – a free network designed to provide a forum for researchers, advocates, practitioners, policy makers and communities to discuss practical alcohol harm reduction

interventions and policy options.

The list is divided into thirteen thematic sub-categories including Alcohol related Harm; Alcohol consumption – recorded and unrecorded; National and International Policies; Local Policies and Strategies; Managing Public Space; Interventions for High Risk Groups; Drinking and Driving; Changing Drinking Environments; Glassware in Bars; Server Training; Alcohol and HIV; and The Alcohol Industry: Partnership, Codes and Conduct.

The list is available from www.ihra.net/AlcoholHarmReduction

New French wine consumer website for France



Vin et société have launched a new consumer website offering advice on how to enjoy wine moderately. The site offers advice to help people consume moderately in a number of situations such as parties, in restaurants or in the workplace. There is also advice on alcohol and children, drink driving and pregnancy.

<http://www.vinetsociete.fr/>

French students, driving and enjoying an evening out

Entreprise & Prévention and FAGE have launched a Responsibility charter for students and nightlife. The goal is to prevent risky driving and augment road safety at students evenings. Messages regarding safety and behaviour are best coming from the students themselves claim the partners.

FAGE is the largest federation representing students in France, who will use their resources to disseminate the charter to 600 student councils with the aim of raising respect amongst themselves, to respect the law and be good citizens. Since 2003, E&P have partnered with FAGE to promote a designated driver programme.

In order to earn the label 'Responsible Student Evening', the associations must fulfil at least 5 of the ten proposals in the charter, which include:

- The promotion of road safety at events;
- To inform students of the risks linked to the excessive consumption of alcohol;
- To have self breath testing kits available at evenings;
- To have a nominated student in charge of road security;
- Not to promote happy hours or to sell alcohol too cheaply;
- To propose free soft drinks;
- The student association should not benefit financially from the profits of the sale of alcohol.

To find out more visit www.ep.soifdevivre.com



Responsible hospitality guides for servers and trainers

Responsible Service of Alcohol: A Server's Guide and the accompanying Trainer's Guide offer good practical advice on responsible hospitality issues and can be used for server training programmes in commercial venues where alcohol is served.

The guides are geared towards serving staff in bars, clubs or restaurants—as well as the retail, hotel and tourism industries generally. They provide valuable tools for promoting a responsible drinking environment.

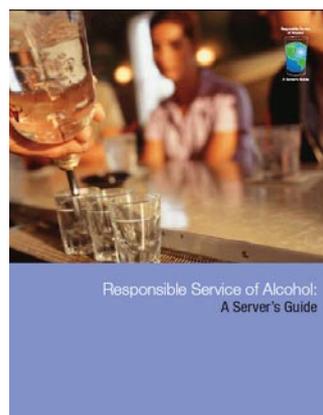
The two guides were commissioned by The European Forum for Responsible Drinking (EFRD) and

developed by Alcohol Focus Scotland (AFS) and underwent extensive peer review by experts and organizations active in responsible hospitality programmes. The guides have been piloted in Hungary. The final documents reflect feedback from

the pilot sessions and are suitable for adaptation in different countries and professional contexts. Plans for future implementation are currently being developed and translations of the

guides will be follow shortly, contact (EFRD).

Both guides are available from www.icap.org/Education/EducatingProfessionals/ResponsibleHospitality/tabid/270/Default.aspx



Alcohol industry self-commitments under EU scrutiny

The European Union Health Commissioner Androulla Vassiliou said she was impressed by industry's voluntary commitments in the EU Alcohol and Health Forum but promised to follow up their implementation "In less than 10 months, stakeholders have tabled an impressive range of 78 commitments. This in itself is a sign of their willingness to take [on] their responsibilities," Vassiliou told the European Alcohol and Health Forum on 16 April. The commitments made so far come from the Forum's 46 major stakeholders representing the alcohol industry, advertising agencies, public health NGOs and youth and medical associations.

"Obviously, committing to action is one thing - delivering is a different

thing," said Vassiliou, promising she would follow up on the implementation "very closely" and report on the results of the Forum's actions in 2009.

In particular, Vassilou called on the alcohol industry to stop marketing to youth, but stopped short of recommending legislative action. Speaking at the European Alcohol and Health Forum in Brussels, Androulla Vassiliou, the health chief of the 27-country region, said that alcohol was a factor in 195,000 deaths in the EU annually. Given that over 5% of those deaths involved automobile accidents, she noted that youth were significantly at risk.

Vassiliou explained that in addition to the Alcohol and Health Forum,

the Commission is progressing with its work to curb the social harm of alcohol through policy development and coordination of EU-27 national policies as well as through integration of health in other policies, such as transport, education and youth, agriculture, research or taxation.

Asked whether the Commission is preparing a legal proposal on reducing alcohol-related social harm, Vassiliou said it was "very premature" to say so as the EU executive wanted to give the stakeholder forum a chance to show what it can do by self-regulation. However, she added she would examine the impact of the action taken and "then decide on how we proceed" in 2009.

Industry marketing can help to reduce harmful drinking

According to a recent press release by the Portman Group, 'Drinks producers and alcohol retailers are considering how their marketing can help to make drunkenness socially unacceptable among young adults and companies are being invited to support the development of an industry initiative aimed at positively influencing young adults' drinking'.

The release follows a seminar on 24 April, hosted by the Portman Group, where Government and industry representatives exchanged information on existing responsible drinking campaigns.

They also examined the potential of social marketing to change

the behaviour of the significant minority of young adults who drink irresponsibly.

The seminar was held as the Portman Group published a report on the social responsibility work of the major drinks producers.

Speaking after the seminar, David Poley, Portman Group Chief Executive, said: "Companies recognise the level of public concern surrounding the harms associated with some young adults' drinking. Speakers at the seminar demonstrated how marketing can be used to positively influence young adults... There's been a growing movement among industry over recent months to use its marketing to promote

responsible drinking. A number of companies have developed their own campaigns. Companies are using their marketing to promote responsibility messages and they are also funding The Drinkaware Trust".

The report is available at <http://www.portmangroup.co.uk/assets/documents/Web%20PDF%20Brochure%20Portman.pdf>



EFRD Launch new training tool on commercial communications

EFRD has launched its training tool on commercial communications. This new tool is part of the EFRD commitment to the European Alcohol Forum and the hope is that the toolkit will help promote responsible marketing across Europe.

The Code is relevant to all brand advertising or marketing communications to consumers, regardless of the medium used.

The Code identifies areas where the commercial communications about alcohol require particular sensitivity. These 'themes' include the portrayal of alcohol misuse, minors, drink driving, hazardous activities, health aspects, pregnancy, alcohol content, and alcohol linked to performance, social and sexual success'.

The EFRD site is at www.marketresponsibly.eu



Finland update

Finnish drinking habits

The Finnish Ministry of the Interior has suggested that Finnish drinking habits pose a considerable threat to the security of the nation and aim an action plan urges for heavier taxation and reduction in alcohol consumption to 2003 levels.

The objective of the action programme is to make Finland the safest country in Europe by 2015. Minister of the Interior Anne Holmlund (National Coalition Party) acknowledges that the timetable is "challenging".

Consumption has climbed over the past five years by 15%. March 2004 saw a cut in the taxation on alcohol, designed to pre-empt a rush of alcohol tourism to Estonia when that country joined the European Union two months later.

The price-cuts, which then focused most strongly on spirits, have since been somewhat retracted, with alcohol taxes raised across the board from January 1st 2008.

Warning labels

The Finnish government is also proposing that last year's amendment to the law on alcohol regarding attaching warning labels to containers of alcoholic beverages be annulled. According to the parliamentary decision from last year, the stickers were to state in 3mm-high letters "WARNING: Alcohol is hazardous to the development of the foetus and to your health".

The revoking of Paragraph 33b of the Act on Alcohol is a rare occurrence in that the amendment will now be annulled even before it

ever came into force. The new law on alcohol was to become effective from the beginning of 2009.

The revoking of the rule is necessary because of an EU Commission ruling just before Christmas last year, which would cause the warnings planned by Finland to contravene EU directives. The Commission saw that warning labels issued unilaterally by a member state would have an effect on the operation of the Union's internal market and the free movement of goods.

Breathalyser ignition locks

The Finnish government has decided to propose making its programme on breathalyser ignition locks permanent. According to a government bill, a convicted drunk driver could be granted a supervised right to drive, as long as he or she agreed to operate only a vehicle equipped with a breathalyser ignition lock.

The voluntary use of the device has been pilot-tested for almost three years now. The experiment ends in June, and feedback has been positive. The cost of using the equipment (EUR 110 - 160 per month), is paid by the driver. To provide subsistence support for acquiring such a device would be at the discretion of the local authorities. The introduction of the alcometric ignition lock would not affect the sentences passed for driving under the influence. The monitoring of the right to drive would last from one to three years, depending on the court ruling.

Sweden: Smugglers – business as usual

by Christopher Jarnvall - Alcohol Update

For a while official Swedish figures have shown a decrease in the private import of legal alcohol as well as illegal. At the same time the retail monopoly – Systembolaget – shows better sales than ever, though we could see a minor decrease even in their figures at the beginning of this year. There is no need for a tax reduction in order to redirect the consumption to the legal market, says Government. Swedes buy more and more from Systembolaget and import less. So the officials say.

But is this the truth? Well, due to present research it is, at least if we believe the official statistics. But talking with the Customs, they say, it is business as usual in the illegal market. They haven't noticed any decrease in larger imports. i.e: They don't measure if Swedes bring such volumes as 40 litres of beer, 30 litres of wine or 10 litres of spirits – they look for bigger cargo. And if we talk about big quantities, they see no decrease what so ever. The smugglers do business as usual.

Mainly we are talking about beer and spirits from cheap supermarkets in Germany or Denmark, but especially Germany. It is good business for people to drive down to Germany, fill a pick up with beer or spirits and return home and sell it in the street to anybody – mainly youngsters that are not able to buy from the retail monopoly.

Parallel to this the Swedish brewers have noticed a huge increase (25% during 2007) in export of beer to countries like Germany, Denmark and the Baltics. Moreover, much of the beer exported soon returns in trucks to Sweden, since it is much cheaper to buy Swedish beer in Germany, Latvia or Estonia than at home. Then we see the same liquid in the black market, sold to school children equipped with the right mobile phone number, calling their dealers seven days a week, 24 hours a day.

Well, the official statistics shows increased figures for Systembolaget

and a drop in smuggling of around ten percent during 2007. Few believe this is the truth, however.

Finally, a fresh report from the social authorities shows that young people in Stockholm and the surrounding areas drink more smuggled alcohol than ever. Among the school children 55% of the boys and 48% of the girls admit that they have been drinking smuggled alcohol during last year. The consumption of smuggled alcohol has passed the levels of consumption of moon shine alcohol by far.

These new figures are very surprising to everybody – no one expected the consumption to be this high.

Anyway: Still the official figures – for some reason - speak about less smuggling and the Government seems to be more or less uninterested to do anything about the problem, though everybody knows there is something rotten in the Kingdom of Sweden!

Sweden's alcohol taxation policy

The European Court of Justice ruling in favour of Sweden's alcohol taxation policy in April, will fail to address key industry concerns over excise rates, according to a Vin & Spirit spokesperson Peeter Luksep.

The European Union had taken Sweden to court over allegations that its policy for taxing alcoholic products offered indirect protection to beer by leveraging higher taxes on wines, mainly imported from other countries.

In its ruling, the court said that it found insufficient evidence that pricing would have any major

impact on consumption, and therefore did not contravene trade laws.

Luksep argued that the judgement would have little impact on the industry compared to resolving the issue of varying excise rates between neighbouring Northern EU countries, adding that V&S is extremely concerned about the different levels of tax put on its products within different markets of Northern Europe, as this creates a significant problem with cross border shopping for alcohol in the

region, which distorts trade in the individual countries.

“It leads not only to legal private cross-border shopping but also to grey-zone and outright illegal operations, which are harmful for all serious businesses,” Luksep stated. *“In comparison to the cross-border problem, differences between domestic rates for wine and beer are of marginal importance.”*

While these concerns were mainly targeted towards spirits manufacturers, there were also fears for beer and wine makers operating in Northern Europe, he added.

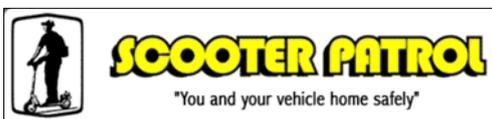
Consumer and health groups press for alcohol facts label in US

On April 23rd, a coalition of public interest groups called for the federal government to end 30 years of “deliberations and fact finding” by issuing a useful final regulation to require standardised labelling information on beer, wine and distilled spirits products in the US. At a news conference in Washington, members of a broad-based coalition of public health leaders and consumer advocacy organisations used the occasion of Alcohol Awareness Month to release a white paper laying out the need for an easy-to-read, standardised label that will provide consumers with complete information about alcohol and calorie content per serving. Issued as a nationwide call to action, the white paper concludes that easily accessible alcohol labelling can play an important role in reducing alcohol misuse, drunk driving, and diseases attributable to excessive alcohol intake. To highlight this issue for federal policymakers, Shape Up America! - the anti-obesity crusade launched by former Surgeon General C.

Everett Koop, also unveiled a newspaper advertising campaign featuring an open letter to Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson signed by 18 organisations and public health officials. The open letter cites 30 years of delay by Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau (TTB) and its predecessor agency, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (BATF), in responding to public pressure, several petitions, and court challenges, in producing a standardised label on all alcoholic beverages. TTB’s most recent action occurred in 2007 when the agency proposed a mandatory “Serving Facts” panel on beer, wine and distilled spirits but left out the requirement that manufacturers list information about the alcohol content per standard serving. The National Consumers League and Shape Up America! released the findings of a new opinion poll, conducted by Opinion Research Corporation. The poll surveyed 1,003 adult Americans aged 21 and over from April 11-14, 2008 to

identify the information consumers consider most important on an alcohol label. The top priority cited by 77% of respondents is listing the alcohol content followed by the amount of alcohol per serving (73%) and the calories in each serving (65%). The number of servings in the bottle or can (57%), the carbohydrates in each serving (57%), the amount of fat in each serving (52%), and the protein in each serving (46%). The new poll also validates the usefulness of alcohol labels to educate consumers about following the Dietary Guidelines’ advice on moderate drinking, which is defined as up to one drink per day for women and up to two drinks a day for men. When asked if Americans should follow this advice, 71% agreed and 58% said they would use the alcohol label for this purpose. These findings reinforce a previous online survey conducted for Shape Up America! in December 2007, which reported that 79% of consumers would support alcohol labeling that summarizes the Dietary Guidelines’ advice.

Scooter Patrol to get you home safely



Scooter Patrol is an innovative scheme to prevent drinking and driving in LA – a new take on having a designated driver. Anthony Panzia founded the company in 2003. “I was thinking about how many people drive under the influence and realised it has a lot to do with people wanting to have their vehicle available the next morning,” says Panzia.

The schemes non-profit’s drivers arrive on a scooter that folds up and is put in trunk of the car. They then drive your car home, return your keys. As an added bonus, the Goped Scooters Panzia’s volunteers ride are environmentally friendly. They get 100 to 200 miles a gallon, they now also have an electric model. Scooter Patrol mainly covers the O.C. and Long Beach but they’re in negotiations to soon cover L.A.

The suggested donation for the service is \$2 per person. For more information visit www.scooterpatrol.org



New Mexico produces newspaper supplement on underage drinking



The State of New Mexico joined forces with several other groups to publish a March 2008 newspaper supplement devoted to information about underage drinking. The supplement featured a letter to parents from New Mexico Governor Bill Richardson and First Lady Barbara Richardson. The letter states that parental disapproval of drinking is the primary reason kids choose not to drink alcohol, and urges parents to educate themselves about the dangers of underage drinking and the proven skills to prevent it.

The 12-page supplement provides information about teen brain development and alcohol, the risks associated with drinking, parental influence on alcohol use, new brain research and the effects of alcohol, the increased risk of addiction, the influence of friends and peers, and techniques for helping parents address underage drinking with their children. The supplement was supported by the New Mexico Department of Transportation, the University of New Mexico Health Sciences Center, MADD, Wal-Mart, and the New Mexico Department of Health.

More information about the supplement can be found on the new Web site www.PreventUnderageDrinkingNM.org.

Online interactive video programme trains clinicians to help heavy drinkers

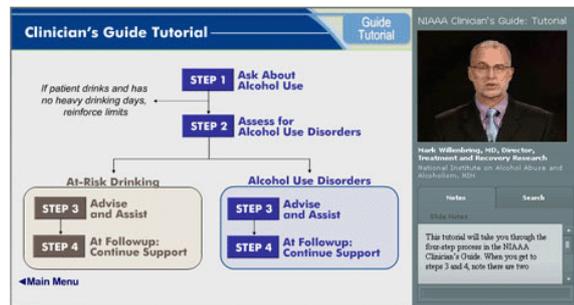
A new, interactive video training programme from the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA), part of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), demonstrates quick and effective strategies

for screening patients for heavy drinking and helping them to cut down their drinking.

“The video scenarios demonstrate evidence-based techniques for assessing and managing at-risk drinking and alcohol use disorders,” says NIAAA Director Ting-Kai Li, M.D. “We want to make these techniques widely available to clinicians so that more people with alcohol use problems will get the help they need.”

Called ‘Video Case Studies: Helping Patients Who Drink Too Much’, the programme is available through the NIAAA website at www.niaaa.nih.gov/guide.

Based on the NIAAA Clinician’s Guide, the online programme



features four 10-minute video case scenarios, each led by an expert clinician who offers insights and engages viewers in considering different strategies for treatment and follow-up.

Ronald M. Davis, M.D., president of the American Medical Association (AMA) commented: “Scientific evidence shows if we can prevent alcohol consumption from becoming a problem, we can help stop thousands of alcohol-related diseases and injuries. The AMA encourages physicians to learn how to conduct screening and brief interventions for at-risk drinking behaviour and how to identify and treat alcoholism”.

DISCUS Internet/ Digital buying guide

DISCUS have released an ‘Internet/ Digital Buying guideline’. In developing the guideline, the DISCUS Code Review Board met with experts in the field, syndicated “internet” demographic data sources and various media companies to obtain their respective best thoughts in devising a “buying guideline” for this medium to implement the 70% 21 years of age and older demographic provisions of the Code.

The Board developed the internet/digital buying guideline that will apply to advertising and marketing materials placed on the internet on and after January 1, 2008. Placements on this medium also will be subject to the Code’s provision for semi-annual after-the-fact audits of a random portion of past advertising/marketing placements. It is thought that DISCUS are the first trade group to issue an internet buying guideline that will be used across an entire industry.

Brown-Forman advances alcohol education

Representatives of Brown-Forman Corporation, visited the University of Kentucky campus on 8th April to present a \$200,000 gift to the UKy Office of Alcohol and Health Education Office (AHEO) in the Division of Student Affairs. The gift, which will be given over a three-year period, will enable the expansion of educational and prevention programmes for all UKy (University of Kentucky) students.

“We will be able to expand our ‘Question Authority’ campaign to reach out to the freshman class during the first week of classes in the fall, a time when young people are particularly vulnerable to excessive alcohol consumption,” said Andrew Smith, director of AHEO.

Although Brown-Forman has funded many alcohol harm reduction programmes over the last two decades, this is the first time that the company has directly funded a college campus initiative.

“We want to be a more direct part of the solution to the problems of alcohol misuse and abuse, and

what better place to start than in our home state with a great partner such as the University of Kentucky, Facts show that (UKy’s) programme has been highly effective in its eight-year history in reducing both student drunk driving and public intoxication arrests.” said Mark McCallum, Brown-Forman’s chief marketing officer.

The “Question Authority” campaign seeks to 1) educate students, administration, and the community about the correlation between alcoholism and genetics, and 2) promote healthy, open and honest dialogue about family histories of alcoholism between students and their parents.

Smith summed up “this will also enable us to expand training of CAUSE volunteers, to fund educational information about the CAUSE’s Prepared, Aware, Well-Informed, and Self-Confident Campaign (P.A.W.S.), and to perform alcohol- and drug-related research,”

‘Brutally honest’ adverts target heavy drinkers in New Zealand

The Alcohol Advisory Council of New Zealand (ALAC) has launched new hard-hitting advertisements showing the harmful consequences of drinking to drunkenness.

The television commercials show graphic examples of excessive drinking leading to harm, with three realistic characters eventually making poor and dangerous choices.

“These commercials are unpleasant but so are the consequences of binge drinking,” ALAC CEO Gerard Vaughan says.

“It is time to be brutally honest about some of the worst effects of intoxication.”

The commercials feature an 0800 number and website www.hadenough.org.nz. The 0800 number directs callers to the Alcohol Drug Helpline, while the campaign website has information about binge drinking, where to go for help, being a responsible host, managing your drinking, and campaign materials.

The three television commercials focus on transformation – when good times turn bad.

US States consider lowering the legal drinking age

Seven US states are contemplating changing their laws to allow residents younger than 21 years to drink alcohol, officials said.

Kentucky, Wisconsin and South Carolina are considering laws to change the drinking age only for members of the military.

Missouri, South Dakota, Vermont and Minnesota are debating laws that would allow all residents to take advantage of the lower required age.

Kentucky state Rep. David Floyd, R-Bardstown, who said he thinks the legal drinking age should be 18, argued that military personnel exhibit their ability to handle alcohol-drinking responsibilities while serving their country.

States considering changing drinking ages face losing as much as 10% of federal highway funding because of the 1984 Uniform Drinking Age Act, which threatens to pull funding if states lower legal drinking ages below 21.

Advocates for lowering drinking ages argue that the act is outdated (introduced in 1984) and that if Americans are considered mature enough to vote, die for their country and marry they should also be allowed to decide whether to enjoy a drink or not.

Another idea being discussed is a graduated license, which could be revoked if the license owner is caught drunk driving or in a drink related incident for 18 – 21 year olds.

Consumption of Alcohol, Australia, 2006-07 report

A recent publication in Australia provides estimates of the quantity of beer and wine available for consumption for the financial years 2004–05 to 2006–07. It also includes estimates of the annual per person consumption by persons aged 15 years and over. Estimates of pure alcohol available for consumption are included, together with per capita consumption of pure alcohol by persons aged 15 years and over.

The per capita consumption of pure alcohol by persons aged 15 years and over remained similar between 2004–05 and 2006–07 (Table 5). The quantity of beer available for consumption increased from 1,767.2 million litres in 2005–06 to 1,789.9 million litres in 2006–07, an increase of 1.3%. The quantity of mid and full strength beer increased (6.7% and 1.8% respectively), while low strength beer decreased 7.8%. The consumption of beer overall

by persons aged 15 years and over continues to decrease. The quantity of wine available for consumption rose from 463.2 million litres in 2005–06 to 490.4 million litres in 2006–07, a 5.9% increase, with the per person consumption of wine by persons aged 15 years and over increasing from 28.1 to 29.2 litres of wine over this period.

The quantity of alcohol in the

form of spirits available for consumption increased by 2.3% between 2005–06 and 2006–2007 (19.4 and 19.8 million litres of alcohol respectively). The apparent consumption of alcohol in the form of spirits (excluding Ready to Drink spirits) by persons aged 15 years and over remained similar.

The report is available at www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS

Table 5 ALCOHOL, Available for Consumption and Apparent Per Person Consumption by Persons aged 15 years and over -

Years ended 30 June

	2005	2006	2007
Available for consumption ('000 litres of alcohol)			
Beer	74,279	75,371	76,753(a)
Wine	50,803	r51,459	51,276
Spirits(b)	19,667	19,384	19,827
Ready to Drink(c)	r15,338	r16,794	18,123
Total	r160,087	r163,008	165,979
Apparent per person consumption (15 years and over)			
(litres of alcohol/person)			
Beer	r4.57	r4.56	4.57(a)
Wine	3.13	r3.12	3.05
Spirit(b)	1.21	1.17	1.18
Ready to Drink(c)	r0.94	r1.02	1.08
Total	r9.85	r9.87	9.88

(a) Due to excise tariff reform in July 2006, data may not be directly comparable with data prior to 2004–05 (see Explanatory notes, paragraph 5).
 (b) Excludes Ready to Drink pre-mixed spirits (see Explanatory notes, paragraph 11).
 (c) Ready to Drink pre-mixed products include spirit based, wine based, and other than spirit or wine based products (see Explanatory notes, paragraph 11).
 "r" indicated revised data (see Explanatory notes paragraph 11, paragraph 14 and paragraph 16).

Fine for providing drink to minors in Australia

Parents who send their children to schoolies (high school leavers) week and parties with cartons of alcohol will face \$6000 fines under tough new Queensland Government laws. Premier Anna Bligh said irresponsible parents and other adults who supplied underage teens with booze would be hit hard.

"This is not aimed at teenagers whose parents give them a sip of

wine during a special occasion... In a time of growing concern about the culture of teenage binge-drinking, the law needs to be clear and unequivocal." Bligh said.

One of the key recommendations of the Government's Youth Violence Task Force is a crackdown on adults providing alcohol for underage drinkers. Ms Bligh said the maximum fine of \$6000 was

proposed for so-called "secondary supply" offences, as part of the wide-ranging reform of the Liquor Act that went before Parliament in April. The fine would apply to all adults - including parents, older siblings and friends of underage drinkers - who "recklessly" provided liquor to teenagers or children.

The police should have the powers in time for Schoolies in November.

Alcohol submissions to 2020 Summit

DrinkWise Australia has submitted a number of policy ideas to the Prime Minister's Australia 2020 Summit following its forum on "Alcohol and the Australian Culture" DrinkWise Chair, Trish Worth, said one of the recommendations from the forum was for a code of conduct to be developed to stop the glamourisation of intoxication through the media,

often highlighted by the actions of celebrities and sports stars.

DrinkWise's submission to the 2020 Summit recommends the development of a user directory or 'clearing house' of responsible alcohol initiatives across Australia and across all tiers of Government so that successful programmes can be more easily identified and adopted.

A user directory would be able to include a short description of each programme, its location, and key contact details. The forum also recommended a nationally consistent approach to legislation, regulation and guidelines, particularly in relation to the service and secondary services of alcohol to minors and nationally recognised training on the responsible service of alcohol.

WHO draft resolution on reducing alcohol related harm globally for adoption in May

The World Health Organisation has released its draft resolution on alcohol harm reduction for adoption in May. WHO believes that much of the attributable burden of disease (estimated to represent 4% of the Global burden of disease in this report) can be eliminated through effective cooperation, information and project sharing and through the establishment of better evaluation and measurement criteria internationally. The report also looks at 'drinking to intoxication' as a classification rather than the undefined use of 'binge drinking'.

Importantly, for the first time, WHO recognises the contribution of inter stakeholder partnerships in reducing under age sales and the night time economy for example. The resolution also recognises the need for local strategies and that there is a no 'one size fits all' set of alcohol reduction policies that can be implemented internationally. It does call on each country to have a written alcohol policy however and to information share on best practice.

The 34 member states of the Executive Committee of the World Health Organisation (WHO) met in January 2008 in Geneva and drafted a resolution to be submitted for adoption of the 61st World Health Assembly between 19-24 May 2008. This draft resolution, recommends and requests the Director General of the WHO

'To submit to the 63rd World Health Assembly in 2010, a draft global strategy to reduce harmful use of alcohol that is based on all available evidence and existing

best practices and that addresses relevant policy options, taking into account different national, religious and cultural contexts, including national public health problems, needs and priorities, and differences in Member States' resources, capacities and capabilities;

This strategy should optimally combine available measures and interventions that target the general population, vulnerable groups, individuals and specific problems;

This strategy's aim is to support and complement public health policies in Member States, with special emphasis on an integrated approach to protect at-risk populations, young people and those affected by harmful drinking of others to ensure that the draft global strategy will be composed of a set of proposed measures recommended for states to implement at a national level taking into account the national circumstances of each country, to collaborate with member states as well as with intergovernmental organisations, health professionals, non-governmental organisations and economic operators on ways they could contribute to reducing harmful use of alcohol'.

The secretariat report states

'The burden attributable to alcohol is to a large extent avoidable, and there is much evidence for the effectiveness, including cost-effectiveness, of different strategies and interventions to reduce alcohol-related harm. Since 2005 the Secretariat has strengthened its work in this area at global and regional levels, and undertaken a broad and extensive consultation

process involving all WHO regions, Member States and other stakeholders on public health impact of harmful use of alcohol.

To be effective, strategies and policy element options should address levels, patterns and context of alcohol consumption through a combination of measures that target the population at large, vulnerable groups, affected individuals and particular problems such as drink-driving. Alcohol policies or action plans to reduce alcohol-related harm should take into account several major issues, such as the strength of evidence, cultural sensitivity, adaptation to local needs and contexts, ensuring an intersectoral approach, and provision for adequate monitoring and evaluation.

A written alcohol policy or strategy can facilitate and clarify the contributions and division of responsibilities of the different partners who must be involved. An action plan at country and, when appropriate, subnational and municipal levels with clear objectives, strategies and targets is required. Regular reports on the harmful use of alcohol at international, national, regional and local levels need to be available to a wide public audience.

However, WHO continues to call for alcohol control policies including the restriction of sales outlets, type of outlet and hours, restrictions or bans on advertising and raising the price of alcohol as effective methods of reducing per capita alcohol consumption. The organisation maintains its objective of reducing

per capita alcohol consumption as a means of reducing misuse.

The report states: 'It is very difficult to target young adult consumers without exposing cohorts of adolescents under the legal age to the same marketing practices. Controls or partial bans on volume, placement and content of alcohol advertising are important parts of a strategy, and research results underline the need for such controls or bans, in particular to protect adolescents and young people from pressure to start drinking.

'Directly focusing on reducing the negative consequences of drinking and alcohol intoxication can be an effective strategy in specific contexts. A range of interventions to reduce alcohol-related harm in and around licensed premises has been developed. Interventions that focus on changing the night-life environment can reduce the harmful consequences of drinking in and around these settings, without necessarily altering overall consumption levels. The impact of these measures is greatly enhanced when there is active and ongoing enforcement of laws and regulations prohibiting sale of alcohol to intoxicated customers and policing of the streets at night. The evidence base for harm-reduction approaches, however, is not yet as well established as that for regulating the availability and demand for alcohol beverages'.

WHO draft resolutions

The strongest drinking-related predictor of many chronic illnesses is the cumulated amount of alcohol consumed over a period of years.

Other factors include the pattern of drinking, in particular occasional or regular drinking to intoxication; the drinking context, which may increase the risks of unintentional injury and of transmission of certain infectious diseases; and the quality of the alcoholic beverage or its contamination with toxic substances such as methanol.

The public health problems caused by the harmful use of alcohol are multidimensional and complex, with significant differences in consumption levels, drinking patterns and drinking contexts between countries and regions (...)

To be effective, strategies and policy element options should address levels, patterns and context of alcohol consumption through a combination of measures that target the population at large, vulnerable groups, affected individuals and particular problems such as drink-driving.

Community-based action, with appropriate engagement of different stakeholders, can effectively reduce the harmful use of alcohol

- Drink driving: "a substantial body of research evidence exists that introducing a low limit for blood alcohol concentration reduces the harm"; (...) "consistent enforcement by police departments using random, targeted or selective breath-testing is essential and should be supported by sustained publicity and awareness campaigns".
- Addressing the availability of alcohol: "Regulating production and distribution of alcoholic beverages is an effective strategy to reduce harmful use of alcohol and in particular to protect young people and other vulnerable groups";
- Addressing marketing of alcoholic beverages: "controls or partial bans on volume, placement and content of alcohol advertising are important parts of a strategy, and research results underline the need for such controls or bans, in particular to protect adolescents and young people from pressure to start drinking";
- Pricing policies: "Price is an important determinant of alcohol consumption and, in many contexts, of the extent of alcohol-related problems. Considerable evidence has accumulated to support the use of tax changes as a means of influencing price. High tax rates may not be the first choice of policy in countries where alcohol-related problems are less important or there is a considerable informal market, and interventions directed at particular subpopulations may be more cost-effective. Even in such countries, decreases in prices of alcoholic beverages or an increase in disposable income without appropriate adjustment in those prices could counteract such policies. A particular concern emerges when alcoholic drinks are cheaper than non-alcoholic alternatives such as bottled water".

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