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## Russia

In Russia, the State Duma has approved a bill in its first reading which toughens the criminal and administrative liability for selling to those underage.

State Secretary and Deputy Interior Minister Igor Zubov said that the draft law seeks to amend Article 151 of the Criminal Code, which imposes the liability for inducing the under-aged to drink alcoholic products regularly, including beer and beer-based drinks. The bill proposes to punish these kinds of violations by two to six years imprisonment.

The fine for selling alcohol to minors will be increased to 15,000 rubles (\$478) from 5,000 rubles for officials and to 300,000 rubles (\$9,560) from 50,000 rubles for legal entities.

It has also been proposed to increase fines for drinking alcohol beverages or being drunk in public places to 1,500 rubles (\$47.8).

## Ukraine

The Ukrainian government has voted to increase the minimum retail price for alcohol in the country. Increases will be implemented in two stages (in 15 days after the publication of the resolution and from 1 March 2013). The first stage sees an increase of 8.4% to UAH 142.50 (EUR 13.66 USD 17.41) per litre of 100% spirit. As a result, price for vodka will grow from UAH 26.1 to UAH 28.5 per 0.5 l bottle and for brandy from UAH 33.1-44.1 to UAH 38.9-49.4 per 0.5 l depending on its age. On 1 March 2013 minimum retail prices for vodka and other alcoholic beverages will be increased by 5.3% more.

## Poland

Multinational retailer Tesco has reportedly suspended all online alcohol beverage sales and deliveries in Poland because of a lack of clear regulations. A Tesco spokesperson said that the 30-year-old Act on Upbringing in Sobriety and Counteracting Alcoholism does not address Internet sales, and therefore it is not certain if they are legal.

## China

Starting in 2013, consumers in China will be required to show their identity cards before purchasing any alcohol products. Sellers that sell alcohol products to minors will be fined up to a maximum of USD 2,000 (EUR 1,567.65).

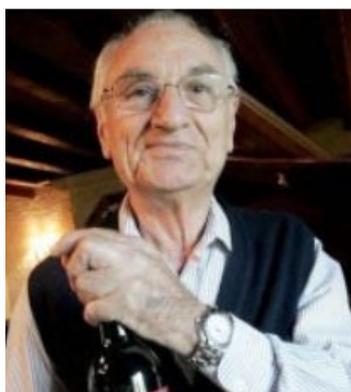
## Latvia

The Latvian Alcohol Beverage Producers and Distributors' Association (LADRIA) estimates that the Latvian illicit market produces 5 million liters of unrecorded alcohol annually, and that 40% of Latvian consumers have purchased illicit alcohol. LADRIA also launched the "Behind the Scenes" campaign to challenge consumers' perception of the legitimacy of non-commercial alcohol.

## Taiwan

In Taiwan, the amended draft of The Tobacco and Alcohol Administration Act has been approved by the Executive Yuan. The legislation introduces fines up to TWD 100mn on those who import or produce fake alcohol. The associated jail term has been raised to a maximum of seven years.

## A Tribute to Serge Renaud (1927 - 2012)



It is with sorrow that we have learned of the death in France on 28 October 2012 of Professor Serge Renaud, who was just weeks short of his 85th birthday. In addition to being a colleague and close friend of many International Scientific

Forum on Alcohol Research (ISFAR) members, he was celebrated as a pioneer in scientific research on the prevention of cardiovascular and other diseases, for which he was awarded The Legion D'Honneur.

His innovative mind opened up new fields of inquiry that have greatly broadened research into the role of wine, alcohol, fatty acids, and other nutrients in preserving health and preventing disease. Over many decades, Professor Renaud was the scientist who initiated much of the work relating the consumption of wine and other types of alcohol to cardiovascular disease and other diseases associated with ageing. He was most associated with the role of red wine in protecting the French from coronary artery disease (the "French Paradox"), and a leading figure in studying how other dietary factors relate to health. His innovative concepts have sometimes taken many years to be appreciated by other scientists. He made a major contribution with his research demonstrating how alpha-linolenic acid, monounsaturated fats, and other components of the "Cretan-type Mediterranean Diet," play key roles in promoting health.

Serge Renaud was born in Cartelègue, Haute Gironde, France, and after starting his medical training in France moved to Montreal, Canada, and later to Boston, Massachusetts, USA. He returned to France in 1973 and became director of the INSERM unit in Lyon, France, where much of his research was carried out.

Serge Renaud's first scientific publication was in 1957, with Hans Selyé, with whom he worked for three years. Serge wanted to study nutrition, and found that the only place to do this was in veterinary medicine, where he obtained his doctoral degree. When he first moved to Canada, he worked as a lumberjack in the Laurentides to pay for his university costs. There, he noted the bad dietary habits of people in Québec, who had the same genes as people in France but had

a very much higher risk of coronary heart disease. This greatly stimulated his desire to evaluate diet as a key factor in the development of disease.

In an excellent tribute to Renaud in the *Lancet* in 2000, Bruno Simini pointed out his major contributions investigating the association between wine, diet, and thrombosis. Simini quotes Serge as saying: "If I hadn't lived with my grandparents and great-grandparents on a vineyard near Bordeaux, perhaps this idea wouldn't have occurred to me. When you see people reach the age of 80 or 90 years, who have been drinking small amounts of wine every day, you don't believe wine in low doses is harmful."

In 1991, Serge Renaud appeared on the popular US television programme, "60 Minutes," in a segment entitled the "French Paradox." When asked by Morley Safer, the host, what was the real reason that the French have rates of coronary artery disease so much lower than those in other developed nations, Renaud replied: "I think it is the alcohol." And when Morley Safer closed the segment holding a glass of red wine and saying, "The explanation of the French Paradox may lie in this inviting glass," the response in the US was remarkable – nothing such as this had ever been stated in the country that earlier in the century had made any alcohol consumption illegal through nation-wide prohibition. Following the television program, sales of red wine rose by 40 per cent!

In addition to his studies on wine and alcohol, Professor Renaud, noting the very low rates of heart disease among participants from Crete in the "Seven Countries Study," initiated the Lyon Diet Heart Study in 1985 to determine the effects of a diet based on that of Crete on the course of disease among patients who already had coronary disease. There were very dramatic reductions in subsequent coronary problems and in total mortality among subjects given the "Cretan-type diet," which contained increased levels of an omega-3 fatty acid (alpha-linolenic acid) to replace some of the fats from meat and dairy products.

As quoted in the *Lancet* tribute by Simini, Professor Renaud said the results of these studies on heart disease and cardiac arrhythmias made him "wonder about the origins of civilisations. It is intriguing that ancient Asian and Mediterranean civilisations used natural oils in cooking—colza and olive—with similar fatty acid compositions." [Colza oil is closely related to the widely used rapeseed oil and canola oil.] And

because of his belief in ancient wisdom when it comes to diet and health, Renaud ends his book *Le régime santé* with a warning: "Don't look for a pill that replaces [the Cretan diet]. There is no such thing."

People around the world have profited, and will continue to profit, from the lifelong scientific work of Serge Renaud. For those of us who knew and worked with him, we cherish our memories of Serge the person, and of Serge the consummate scientist. As stated so well by a Forum member, "We are all in debt to Serge for the lesson he gave to our scientific community: curiosity as the sole reason to investigate,

diligence in observing the facts, unbiased stringency in interpreting results, and, definitely not least, the modesty that only a great man can have. We shall keep him in our memory as an example and a mentor of the meaning of being a scientist."

References: Simini B. Serge Renaud: From French Paradox to Cretan miracle. doi:10.1016/S0140-6736(05)71990-5.

Renaud S. *Le régime santé*. Odile Jacob, Paris, 1998.

These comments provided by members of the International Scientific Forum on Alcohol Research ([www.bu.edu/alcohol-forum](http://www.bu.edu/alcohol-forum))

## Influence of individual and combined healthy behaviours on successful aging

A study published in the *Canadian Medical Association Journal* in October examined the extent to which healthy behaviours in midlife, separately and in combination, predict successful aging. The findings echo many studies over the years that demonstrate that those, especially older adults, who drink moderately, exercise lightly, refrain from smoking and eat a healthy diet live longer and healthier lives than those who do not adopt these 'heart healthy' habits.

The researchers used a prospective cohort design involving 5100 men and women aged 42–63 years. Participants were free of cancer, coronary artery disease and stroke when their health behaviours were assessed in 1991–1994 as part of the Whitehall II study. Healthy behaviours were defined as: never smoking, moderate alcohol consumption (1–14 units/wk for women; 1–21 units/wk for men), physical activity ( $\geq 2.5$  h/wk moderate physical activity or  $\geq 1$  h/wk vigorous physical activity), and eating fruits and vegetables daily.

Successful aging, measured over a median 16.3-year follow-up, was defined as good cognitive, physical, respiratory and cardiovascular functioning, in addition to the absence of disability, mental health problems and chronic disease (coronary artery disease, stroke, cancer and diabetes).

At the end of follow-up, 549 participants had died and 953 qualified as aging successfully. Compared with participants who engaged in no healthy behaviours, participants engaging in all 4 healthy behaviours had 3.3 times greater odds of successful aging (95% confidence interval [CI] 2.1–5.1). The association with successful aging was linear, with the odds ratio (OR) per increment of healthy behaviour being 1.3 (95% CI 1.2–1.4; population-attributable risk for 1–4 v. 0 healthy behaviours 47%).

Source: Influence of individual and combined healthy behaviours on successful aging. Séverine Sabia, Archana Singh-Manoux, Gareth Hagger-Johnson, Emmanuelle Cambois, Eric J. Brunner, Mika Kivimaki. *CMAJ* October 22, 2012 [cmaj.121080](http://cmaj.121080).

## Just one drink increases brain's functional connectivity

Short-term alcohol intake can increase the activity of functional connections across the human brain when it is at rest, according to research published in the open access journal *PLOS ONE* by Panagiotis Bamidis and colleagues from the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece.

Previous studies have shown that alcohol intake increases transmission of signals by the neurotransmitter GABA, present in 40% of the connections between nerve cells in the brain.

Here, the researchers monitored resting brain activity

in healthy social drinkers who had consumed one drink, and found a significant increase in the activity of these connections.

According to the authors, this increase in baseline brain activity is at least partially due to the alcohol-induced increase in GABA-mediated signal transmission.

Source: Alcohol Affects the Brain's Resting-State Network in Social Drinkers Chrysa Lithari, Manouos A. Klados, Costas Pappas, Maria Albani, Dorothea Kapoukranidou, Leda Kovatsi, Panagiotis D. Bamidis, Christos L. Papadelis. *PLOS One* Published on October 31, 2012

## Metabolic and biochemical effects of low-to-moderate alcohol consumption

Authors of a study published online in 'Alcoholism: Clinical and Experimental Research' state that alcohol consumption has multiple biochemical consequences. Only a few of these are useful as diagnostic markers, but many reflect potentially harmful or beneficial effects of alcohol. The average consumption of 2 to 4 drinks per day is associated with lower overall or cardiovascular mortality risk than either lower or higher intake.

The authors analysed the dose-response relationships between reported alcohol consumption and 17 biomarkers, with emphasis on intake of up to 3 drinks per day. Biochemical tests were performed on serum from 8,396 study participants (3,750 men and 4,646 women, aged  $51 \pm 13$  years, range 18 to 93) who had provided information on alcohol consumption in the week preceding blood collection.

Results showed that Gamma glutamyl transferase, alanine aminotransferase, aspartate aminotransferase, carbohydrate-deficient transferrin, urate, ferritin, and bilirubin showed little

or no change with alcohol consumption below 2 to 3 drinks per day, but increased with higher intake. High-density lipoprotein cholesterol and albumin showed increasing results, and insulin showed decreasing results, across the entire range of alcohol use. Biphasic responses, where subjects reporting 1 to 2 drinks per day had lower results than those reporting either more or less alcohol use, occurred for triglycerides, glucose, C-reactive protein, alkaline phosphatase, and butyrylcholinesterase.

Increasing alcohol use was associated with decreasing low-density lipoprotein cholesterol (LDL-C) in younger women, but higher LDL-C in older men.

The authors conclude that some markers show threshold relationships with alcohol, others show continuous ones, and a third group show biphasic or U-shaped relationships. Overall, the biochemical sequelae of low-to-moderate alcohol use are consistent with the epidemiological evidence on morbidity and mortality.

Source: Metabolic and biochemical effects of low-to-moderate alcohol consumption. Whitfield JB; Heath AC; Madden PA; Pergadia ML; Montgomery GW; Martin NG. Alcoholism: Clinical and Experimental Research. Published early online 7 November 2012

## Association of water softness and heavy alcohol consumption with higher hospital admission rates for alcoholic liver disease

A UK study investigated whether regional variations in the prevalence of alcoholic liver disease are contributed to by regional variations in 'softness' of drinking water, i.e. its mineral content.

Annual hospital admission rates for alcoholic liver disease per 100,000 population in the 28 Strategic Health Authorities (SHAs) existing in England over the period 2003–2006 were compared with regional measures of water hardness, alcohol consumption and social deprivation. As corroborative evidence, the same relations were examined for hospital admission rates for osteoporosis, a disorder with an already established link with calcium deficiency in drinking water (as well as with heavy drinking).

Hospital admissions rates for alcoholic liver disease were higher in predominant-soft-water SHAs than with hard water SHAs. These areas, with one exception, were also associated with high alcohol consumption, but not with greater social deprivation. Hospital

admission rates for osteoporosis were found to vary in a way similar to that for alcoholic liver disease, with significant correlations with soft water and alcohol consumption.

The authors conclude that given experimental evidence that magnesium deficiency can aggravate liver damage from alcohol, soft water with its low magnesium concentration may be a factor additional to alcohol consumption in the development of liver damage. The parallel findings with osteoporosis admissions, explainable by low calcium and magnesium levels present in soft water, along with the known effect of heavy drinking on bone metabolism, provide corollary support for the hypothesis linking soft water with the pathogenesis of these two diseases.

Source: Association of Water Softness and Heavy Alcohol Consumption with Higher Hospital Admission Rates for Alcoholic Liver Disease. Mark Howarth, Antonio Riva, Peter Marks and Roger Williams. Alcohol 2012 Nov;47(6) 688-96.

## Effect of dissolved oxygen in alcoholic beverages and drinking water on alcohol elimination in humans

Oxygen plays an important role in the metabolism of alcohol. An increased dissolved oxygen level in alcoholic beverages reportedly accelerates the elimination of alcohol. Therefore, researchers in Korea evaluated the effect of dissolved oxygen in alcohol and the supportive effect of oxygenated water on alcohol pharmacokinetics after the excessive consumption of alcohol (540 ml of 19.5% alcohol).

Fifteen healthy males were included in this randomised, crossover study. Three combinations were tested: X, normal alcoholic beverage and normal water; Y, oxygenated alcoholic beverage and normal water; Z, oxygenated alcoholic beverage and oxygenated water. Blood alcohol concentrations (BACs) were determined by conversion of breath alcohol concentrations. Four pharmacokinetic parameters ( $C_{max}$ ,  $T_{max}$ ,  $K_{el}$ , and  $AUC_{0-\infty}$ ) were obtained using non-compartmental analysis and the times to reach 0.05% and 0.03% BAC ( $T_{0.05\%}$  and  $T_{0.03\%}$ ) were compared using one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) and Duncan's post hoc test.

With combination Z, the BAC decreased to 0.05% significantly faster ( $p < 0.05$ ) than with combination X. Analyzing the pharmacokinetic parameters, the mean  $K_{el}$  was significantly higher for combination Z than for combinations X and Y ( $p < 0.05$ ), whereas the mean values of  $C_{max}$ ,  $T_{max}$  and  $AUC_{0-\infty}$  did not differ significantly among the combinations.

The authors conclude that dissolved oxygen in drinks accelerates the decrease in BAC after consuming a large amount of alcohol. However, the oxygen dissolved in the alcoholic beverage alone did not have a sufficient effect in this case. The authors postulate that highly oxygenated water augments the effect of oxygen in the alcoholic beverage in alcohol elimination. Therefore, it is necessary to investigate the supportive effect of ingesting additional oxygenated water after heavy drinking of normal alcoholic beverages.

Source: Effect of dissolved oxygen in alcoholic beverages and drinking water on alcohol elimination in humans. Su-jin Rhee, Jung-woo Chae, Byung-jeong Song, Eun-sil Lee, Kwang-il Kwon. *Alcohol*, published online 18 October 2012.

## Dose–response relationship between in-hospital mortality and alcohol following acute injury

Although the relationship between alcohol and injury incidence is well researched, there continues to be dispute about the relationship between alcohol and mortality following an injury. A study by Lee Friedman state that findings from past studies have varied primarily because of methodological issues and have failed to characterize the dose–response relationship. The main objective of the study was to evaluate the dose response relationship of in-hospital mortality and blood alcohol concentration (BAC).

The study was a retrospective analysis of traumatic injuries occurring between 1995 and 2009 as reported by all level 1 and 2 trauma units in the State of Illinois. It included all patients with blood alcohol toxicological examination levels ranging from zero to 500 mg/dl ( $N = 190,612$ ). The Illinois trauma registry includes all patients sustaining traumatic injuries and admitted to a trauma center for  $\geq 12$  h. A total of 6733 patients meeting the inclusion criteria died following admission.

In the adjusted multivariable model, a decrease in in-hospital mortality was strongly associated

with an increase in blood alcohol concentration (adjusted OR = 0.83 per 100 mg/dl units change in BAC; CI 95%: 0.80, 0.85;  $p < 0.001$ ). The direction of the dose response relationship was consistent across the stratified models, with the exception of patients suffering burns. The largest reduction of in-hospital case fatality rates by blood alcohol concentration was observed among patients suffering penetrating or severe injuries (Injury Severity Score  $\geq 16$ ).

The authors conclude that in the clinical setting, it is important to understand not only how to recognise intoxicated patients, but also how alcohol may affect the course of treatment. The consistency of the findings across the multivariable models indicates that blood alcohol concentration is strongly associated with lower in-hospital mortality among those that survive long enough to receive treatment in specialised trauma units.

Source: Dose–response relationship between in-hospital mortality and alcohol following acute injury, Lee S. Friedman. *Alcoholism: Clinical and Experimental Research* published online 22 October 2012.

## The subjective physiological, psychological, and behavioral risk-taking consequences of alcohol and energy drink co-ingestion

The increasingly popular practice among adolescents and young adults of consuming alcohol mixed with energy drinks (AmED) has raised concern regarding potential increases in maladaptive drinking practices, negative psychological and physiological intoxication side effects, and risky behavioral outcomes. Comparison of user types has revealed that AmED users report engaging in more risk-taking behaviour relative to alcohol users. However, the comparative likelihood of risk-taking according to session type (i.e., AmED vs. alcohol session) remains relatively unknown. This study was designed with the aim of establishing the subjective physiological, psychological, and behavioral risk-taking outcomes of AmED consumption relative to alcohol consumption for AmED users drawn from the community.

Between May and June 2011, 403 Australians aged 18 to 35 who had consumed AmED and alcohol only in the preceding 6 months completed a 10- to 30-minute online survey about their use of these substances.

Despite participants consuming a significantly greater quantity of alcohol in AmED sessions compared to alcohol sessions, the odds of participants experiencing disinhibition and engaging in 26 risk behaviors were significantly lower during AmED sessions relative to alcohol sessions. Similarly, the odds of experiencing several physiological (i.e., speech and walking difficulties, nausea, and slurred speech) and

psychological (i.e., confusion, exhaustion, sadness) sedation outcomes were less during AmED sessions compared to alcohol sessions. However, the odds of enduring physiological (i.e., heart palpitations, sleep difficulties, agitation, tremors, jolt and crash episodes, and increased speech speed) and psychological (i.e., irritability and tension) outcomes potentially related to overstimulation were significantly greater during AmED sessions than alcohol sessions.

The authors suggest that co-ingestion may provide a double-edged effect. The increased stimulation from energy drinks (EDs) may negate some intoxication-related sedation side effects by increasing alertness. However, it could also lead to negative physiological side effects associated with overstimulation. Notwithstanding any stimulatory effects of EDs, risk and negative effects of excessive alcohol consumption were present in both session types. However, the odds of engaging in risk-taking were less during AmED sessions relative to alcohol sessions. Objective measurement of behavioral risk-taking via laboratory-based measures could confirm the causal relationship between AmED and risk-taking.

Source: The Subjective Physiological, Psychological, and Behavioral Risk-Taking Consequences of Alcohol and Energy Drink Co-Ingestion. Amy Peacock, Raimondo Bruno, Frances H. Martin Alcoholism: Clinical and Experimental Research. Volume 36, Issue 11, pages 2008–2015, November 2012

## Moderate alcohol consumption may improve breast cancer survival

Researchers from Cambridge University have suggested that a up to 2 units of alcohol (16g) a day can help women with breast cancer improve their chances of survival.

Researchers looked at 13,525 women who had been diagnosed and treated for breast cancer and followed them for up to 15 years.

Those who drank seven units of alcohol a week cut the chance of dying from breast cancer in a decade from 20 to 18% and those who drank 14 units reduced the chance of dying to 16%.

Women with the more aggressive oestrogen-receptor negative breast cancers had a slightly stronger benefit while there was slightly weaker benefit among women with oestrogen-receptor positive breast

cancers, which account for about three-quarters of cases.

The link between body mass index and survival was also examined by the research group, which found that fatter women had slightly poorer survival rates than those who were thinner.

Dr Paul Pharoah from the university's department of public health and primary care said: "What our study says is that it is reasonable, if you are diagnosed with breast cancer, to enjoy the occasional drink of alcohol. You shouldn't feel that you should deny yourself the enjoyment of moderate alcohol."

Source: The findings of the study, which was carried out with the South Egypt Cancer Institute, were presented at the National Cancer Research Institute (NCRI) Cancer Conference in Liverpool.

## Effects of alcohol on lymphoma, leukemia, and other types of hematological cancers

Kroll ME, Murphy F, Pirie K, Reeves GK, Green J, Beral V, for the Million Women Study Collaborators. Alcohol drinking, tobacco smoking and subtypes of haematological malignancy in the UK Million Women Study. *British Journal of Cancer* 2012;107:879–887.

### Authors' Abstract

**BACKGROUND:** Previous research suggests associations of lower alcohol intake and higher tobacco consumption with increased risks of haematological malignancy. The prospective Million Women Study provides sufficient power for reliable estimates of subtype-specific associations in women.

**METHODS:** Approximately 1.3 million middle-aged women were recruited in the United Kingdom during 1996–2001 and followed for death, emigration and cancer registration until 2009 (mean 10.3 years per woman); potential risk factors were assessed by questionnaire. Adjusted relative risks were estimated by Cox regression.

**RESULTS:** During follow-up, 9,162 incident cases of haematological malignancy were recorded, including 7,047 lymphoid and 2,072 myeloid cancers. Among predominantly moderate alcohol drinkers, higher intake was associated with lower risk of lymphoid malignancies, in particular diffuse large B-cell lymphoma [relative risk 0.85 per 10 g alcohol per day (95% confidence interval 0.75–0.96)], follicular lymphoma [0.86 (0.76–0.98)] and plasma cell neoplasms [0.86 (0.77–0.96)]. Among never- and current smokers, higher cigarette consumption was associated with increased risk of Hodgkin lymphoma [1.45 per 10 cigarettes per day (1.22–1.72)], mature T-cell malignancies [1.38 (1.10–1.73)] and myeloproliferative/myelodysplastic disease [1.42 (1.31–1.55)].

**CONCLUSION:** These findings confirm and extend existing evidence for associations of subtypes of haematological malignancy with two common exposures in women.

### Forum Comments

While many observational epidemiologic studies have found an inverse association between alcohol consumption and hematological cancers (such as lymphoma and leukemia), the present study is large enough to permit an evaluation of associations with various types of such cancers. The analyses are based on the Million Women's Study in the UK. They analyses take into account newer coding systems for morphology so that diseases associated with the lymphatic system can be separated from those of the myeloid system. The key findings are that alcohol consumption appears to lower the risk of several types of lymphoma and plasma cell neoplasms, but

has little effect on the risk of myeloid tumors such as acute myeloid leukemia.

**Specific comments on the paper:** Forum reviewers consider this to be a very well-done analysis, one that provides important new data on the association of alcohol with cancer. The authors used subjects reporting from 0 to 3 drinks/week as the referent group, and compared the risk of this group with non-drinkers and with those women who consumed more. Follow up averaged more than 10 years, during which more than 9,000 cases of hematological cancer were detected.

None of the types of cancer showed an increase in risk with moderate alcohol consumption. Instead, in comparison with non-drinkers, the risk of lymphoid tumors was reduced among consumers of up to 3 drinks/week (the referent group), and reduced further among those consuming larger amounts of alcohol. The risk of myeloid tumors was not affected by alcohol intake. Tobacco use was associated with an increase in risk for most types of cancer.

Forum reviewer Lanzmann-Petithory commented on preliminary results (not yet published) from the Nancy study (COLOR: Nancy cohort with a Relative Risk for Death from Lymphoid, Haematopoietic and Related Tissue Cancer). She reports that there have been 261 cases of these cancers among 35,292 men. "Adjusted by Cox regression, there is a tendency for a lower risk (RR = 0.59, CI 0.34-1.03) among subjects reporting 3 drinks of alcohol/day. There were no differences noted according to type of alcohol, suggesting that the effects on this type of cancer are probably related to pure alcohol and not wine." She concludes: "Further, it is still possible that there is a dose effect, because the estimated RR of all such tumors in the COLOR study (0.59) was even lower than that seen among the women in the present study, who consumed less alcohol."

**Opposite effects of smoking and drinking:** Forum member De Gaetano believed that the authors fail to present a clear picture of their results. "I see a clear L-shaped curve for drinking doses, both by ICD-O-3 and ICD-10 classifications: e.g., the RR for abstainers was 1.05; for 0.5-3 drinks/week, 1.00; for 3-7 drinks/week, 0.91; and for consumers of more than 7 drinks/week, 0.90. In any case we are dealing with moderate

alcohol amounts: It is not what I immediately understand by reading that the beneficial effect is seen by increasing alcohol doses. I also noticed that if you drink 10 g alcohol/day your RR is 0.92 but if you smoke 10 cigarettes/day your RR is 1.13. This striking difference between drinking and smoking is not clearly expressed in the paper. One cannot simply conclude that drinking and smoking are associated with hematological disease."

**Lack of a demonstrated mechanism:** Some Forum members pointed out that despite the epidemiological evidence, a mechanism for a protection of alcohol against lymphoid cancers had not been demonstrated. Stated reviewer Finkel: "Despite the weight of the numbers and the assurance of the statistical analysis, I intuitively do not place a lot of weight on the apparent benefit of alcohol in reducing risk of the enumerated diseases. We know too little about the details of consumption. I agree that the work was competently done." Adds reviewer Skovenborg: "The big question is why? Plausible biological mechanisms seem to be absent. Is the association causal? New hypotheses and new studies are sorely needed!"

On the other hand, Reviewer Waterhouse counters: "The lack of a mechanism doesn't invalidate the observations, but I agree it raises a need for mechanistic understanding for the disease reduction. Of note is that the lowered relative risk of cancers associated with moderate alcohol consumption is the same, or even lower, than that of other 'healthy' diets, such as high intake of fruits and vegetables."

Lanzmann-Petithory adds: "As there are no postulated mechanisms to explain this inverse relationship with lymphoid cancers, which are very common, this subject seems very relevant. It is important that this study had the power to separate the subgroups according to new coding parameters. Everything is now ready to study the mechanism by which alcohol could protect against mature B cell lymphoid malignancies."

## Forum Summary

Many observational epidemiologic studies have found an inverse association between alcohol consumption and hematological cancers (such as lymphoma and leukemia). This study, based on the Million Women's Study in the UK, is large enough to permit an evaluation of associations with various types of such cancers. Further, it takes into account newer coding systems for morphology so that diseases associated with the lymphatic system can be separated from those of the myeloid system.

The key findings are that alcohol consumption appears to lower the risk of several types of lymphoma and plasma cell neoplasms, but has little effect on the risk of myeloid tumors such as acute myeloid leukemia. Smoking is associated with an increase in risk for most such cancers.

Forum reviewers considered this to be a very well-done analysis, and the ability of the authors to separate the effects on lymphoid and myeloid cancers is important. Forum members emphasize the strong differences in effect of smoking (an increase) and alcohol consumption (a decrease) on the risk of these cancers. They support future research to discover the mechanisms by which moderate drinking may lower such risk.

Comments for this review were provided by the following members of the International Scientific Forum on Alcohol Research:

Harvey Finkel, MD, Hematology/Oncology, Boston University Medical Center, Boston, MA, USA

Arne Svilaas, MD, PhD, general practice and lipidology, Oslo University Hospital, Oslo, Norway

Andrew L. Waterhouse, Marvin Sands Professor, University of California, Davis; Davis, CA, USA

Erik Skovenborg, MD, Scandinavian Medical Alcohol Board, Practitioner, Aarhus, Denmark

Giovanni de Gaetano, MD, PhD, Research Laboratories, Catholic University, Campobasso, Italy

Dominique Lanzmann-Petithory, MD, PhD, Nutrition/Cardiology, Praticien Hospitalier Hôpital Emile Roux, Paris, France

R. Curtis Ellison, MD, Section of Preventive Medicine & Epidemiology, Boston University School of Medicine, Boston, MA, USA

## Compound in grapes, red wine could be key to fighting prostate cancer

A University of Missouri researcher has discovered that the compound resveratrol can make prostate tumor cells more susceptible to radiation treatment.

Michael Nicholl, an assistant professor of surgical oncology in the MU School of Medicine said that "Other studies have noted that resveratrol made tumor cells more susceptible to chemotherapy, and we wanted to see if it had the same effect for radiation therapy,.. We found that when exposed to the compound, the tumor cells were more susceptible to radiation treatment, but that the effect was greater than just treating with both compounds separately."

Prostate tumor cells contain very low levels of two proteins, perforin and granzyme B, which can function together to kill cells. However, both proteins need to be highly "expressed" to kill tumor cells. In his study, when Nicholl introduced resveratrol into the prostate tumor cells, the activity of the two proteins increased greatly. Following radiation treatment, Nicholl found that up to 97% of the tumor cells died, which is a much higher percentage than treatment with radiation alone.

"It is critical that both proteins, perforin and granzyme B, are present in order to kill the tumor cells, and we found that the resveratrol helped to increase their activity in prostate tumor cells," Nicholl said. "Following the resveratrol-radiation treatment, we

realised that we were able to kill many more tumor cells when compared with treating the tumor with radiation alone. It's important to note that this killed all types of prostate tumor cells, including aggressive tumor cells."

Resveratrol is present in grape skins and red wine and available over-the-counter in many health food sections at grocery stores. However, the dosage needed to have an effect on tumor cells is so great that many people would experience uncomfortable side effects.

"We don't need a large dose at the site of the tumor, but the body processes this compound so inefficiently that a person needs to ingest a lot of resveratrol to make sure enough of it ends up at the tumor site. Because of that challenge, we have to look at different delivery methods for this compound to be effective," Nicholl said. "It's very attractive as a therapeutic agent since it is a natural compound and something that most of us have consumed in our lifetimes."

Nicholl said that the next step would be to test the procedure in an animal model before any clinical trials can be initiated. Nicholl's studies were published in the *Journal of Andrology and Cancer Science*.

Source: A Possible Role for Perforin and Granzyme B in Resveratrol-Enhanced Radiosensitivity of Prostate Cancer. Y. Fang, E. J. Herrick, M. B. Nicholl. *Journal of Andrology*, 2011; 33 (4): 752 DOI: 10.2164/jandrol.111.015164

## Student who preload before going out spend more

A survey by studentbeans.com has discovered that 'pre-drinking' before a night out doesn't actually save you any money. 62% of students participating in the poll said that they drink more alcohol at home before heading to a bar or club than they do once they're out.

"Students tend to live with their friends and socialise at home, so skipping a drink in the local pub or student union and heading straight to a bar or club after a few drinks at home has almost become the norm," said Oliver Brann, editor of studentbeans.com.

The survey, which interviewed 2,197 university students between 30th September and 20th October

2011, found that 67% of students listed vodka as their favourite drink (cider 45%, beer 32% and 29% alcopops). 53% of students said that they had missed at least one lecture because they had drunk too much. 67% of participants thought that there is a difference in drinking habits between British and International students. 26% of students also told the survey that initiation ceremonies should be banned because they encourage the consumption of large volumes of alcohol.

## Pre loaders drink more and are associated with more harm than those who stay in or only drink when out

Research in the United States and the United Kingdom indicates that drinking before going out (commonly called “pre loading”) is common among young people and associated with increased harm. On the basis of Swiss data, a study investigated differences in alcohol consumption and adverse or risky outcomes for evenings when persons consumed alcohol before going to a licensed premise (preloading) drank on-premise only, or drank off-premise only.

Using the recently developed Internet-based cell phone-optimized assessment technique (ICAT), alcohol consumption and drinking location were assessed at 6 time points (5 pm to the next morning) on Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays over 5 consecutive weeks by means of participants’ cell phones. Overall, 7,828 assessments provided by 183 young adults (53.0% women, mean age [SD] = 23.1 [3.1]) on 1,441 evenings were analysed by means of cluster-adjusted means and proportion tests and of multilevel structural equation models. The extent to which alcohol consumption mediated the association between predrinking and adverse outcomes was also examined.

Higher alcohol consumption occurred on evenings with predrinking (7.1 drinks on average) compared with on-premise only (4.2 drinks) and off-premise only (4.3 drinks) evenings. Adverse outcomes occurred more often on evenings with predrinking (with 23.8% of predrinking nights involving at least 1 outcome) than on evenings with on-premise drinking only (13.9%) and off-premise drinking only (12.0%). Predrinking was indirectly associated with adverse outcomes, mediated by larger amounts of alcohol consumed in the evening.

The authors suggest that because of its association with heavier consumption and related adverse outcomes, predrinking, especially combined with on-premise drinking, represents a major target for prevention. Educational interventions as well as staff training in responsible beverage service, are needed to prevent high total consumption and related adverse consequences among young people.

Source: Pre loaders drink more and are associated more harm than those who stay in or drink when out Labhart F; Graham K; Wells S; Kuntsche E *Alcoholism: Clinical and Experimental Research* Published early online 8 November 2012

## Spanish study finds young people who go out drinking start earlier and consume more alcohol

There is a phenomenon contributing to the current pattern of alcohol consumption among youngsters in Spain known as “botellon”, these are street parties held in town squares for example where young people meet to socialise.

A study headed by the University of Valencia financed by the National Plan on Drugs (2004-2007), collated data of 6009 youngsters (14-25 years old) from three Spanish cities. Only individuals who engage in intensive consumption of alcohol (n = 2807) were included.

The purpose of this work has been to identify the different types of consumers at risk through a cluster analysis and to establish a profile for each particular group. Four groups were differentiated by age, gender, alcohol consumption and years of consumption. It was observed that adolescent students and university students of the same sex consume similar quantities

of alcohol, and justify their consumption alluding to personal factors, whereas university students refer to issues related to control of leisure. The consumption by males is the highest, and they are the most likely to seek drunkenness. They associate to a lesser degree their consumption with the possibility of developing an addictive process. In general, all youngsters consider that their consumption will have no negative consequences. These results indicate the need to come up with different alternatives, addressing the particularities of each group.

Source: Traits that define the different alcohol intensive consume type during the practice of “botellon”. Espejo B, Cortés MT, del Río BM, Giménez JA, Gómez C. *Span J Psychol.* 2012 Mar;15(1):256-64.

## 'Just say no' campaigns could have opposite effect

Researchers from Oxford University and American colleagues found that smokers showed more interest in cigarettes after being shown a series of images that contained 'no smoking' signs in the background. The results suggest that campaigns against smoking and other undesirable behaviour could ironically "trigger the very behaviours they are meant to discourage".

Previous studies have shown that cues in the environment can 'prime' the brain for particular behaviour. But in a paper to be published in the *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, Brian Earp and colleagues explained that we tend to disregard negations, such as the word "don't" in the phrase "don't drink and drive", when we are not paying full attention.

They state: "For unconscious or automatic processing, 'not good' is often taken as 'good', and 'not bad' as 'bad'. Negation of concepts does not occur automatically but requires cognitive effort... Our model suggests that public health campaigns which explicitly discourage the consumption of unhealthy substances could in fact trigger that very consumption."

The researchers tested their theory by asking a group of 32 volunteers, all of whom were smokers, to look at a series of photographs, some of which featured 'no smoking' signs in the background. Their motivation to smoke was then estimated by a test in which the

participants were shown several images of objects including cigarettes, and told to 'approach' or 'avoid' them as quickly as possible by pushing or pulling a lever.

Their findings showed that volunteers who had seen photographs containing 'no smoking' signs were quicker to approach smoking-related images than neutral ones. In contrast, a control group who initially saw a neutral set of photographs without 'no smoking' signs showed no preference for smoking-related images. There was also no difference between participants who spotted the 'no smoking' signs in the photographs and those who saw the same pictures but did not consciously notice the signs.

"This finding indicates that the ironic effect of incidental exposure to no-smoking signs can occur regardless of whether the smoker consciously notices the signs, and that conscious awareness may not be sufficient to override the automatic motivation to attain the negated item," the researchers wrote.

Brian Earp, who led the study, the same effects may apply to public health campaigns which urge people to "just say no".

Source: Earp, B. D., Dill, B., Harris, J., Ackerman, J. M., & Bargh, J. A. (in press). No sign of quitting: Incidental exposure to no-smoking signs ironically boosts cigarette-approach tendencies in smokers. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*. Pre-publication draft.

## Alcohol warning labels: unlikely to affect alcohol-related beliefs and behaviours in adolescents

An article published online in *The Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health* reviews the available literature and evaluate the impact of alcohol warning labels on adolescent drinking, knowledge and behaviour.

The introduction of alcohol warning labels was shown to be associated with an initial increased awareness of alcohol warning label law, exposure to the labels, and increased recognition of the warning label messages. Little change was observed in terms of beliefs about the risks of alcohol use or participation in risky alcohol-related behaviours. These findings are similar to those reported among adult samples. However, the vast majority of the literature originated from the same group of authors, with samples drawn from a single geographical region. This may greatly limit the findings.

The authors suggest that the introduction of alcohol warning labels in Australia may increase awareness about the risks of alcohol consumption among adolescents; however, these labels appear unlikely to change adolescent drinking behaviours or beliefs about alcohol-related risks. According to the researchers, further research in multiple cultural contexts is required to confirm these findings, but alcohol warning labels should be considered as only one aspect of a range of other proven strategies to change knowledge, attitudes and behaviour.

Source: Alcohol warning labels: unlikely to affect alcohol-related beliefs and behaviours in adolescents, Scholes Balog KE; Heerde JA; Hemphill SA. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health*. Published early online 8 November 2012.

## Portman Group announces fifth edition of Code of Practice

The fifth evolution of the Portman Group Code of Practice for alcohol producers has been released, setting the standard for responsible alcohol marketing and effective industry self-regulation.

The Portman Group committed to review the Code of Practice on the Responsible Naming, Packaging and Promotion of Alcoholic Drinks in 2011 as part of the Government's Responsibility Deal.

The review included a full public consultation, expert workshops and views from over one hundred stakeholders ranging from government bodies, NGOs and the public health community through to producers, marketing experts and industry representatives.

The fifth edition of the Portman Group Code will:

**Ensure rigorous self-regulation** – the remit of the Code has been extended so that it applies to all alcohol marketing not otherwise regulated by the ASA or Ofcom – this includes all producer-led marketing and joint promotions with retailers where the producer has given approval, public relations activity and any digital marketing which falls outside the ASA's remit.

**A clamp down on inappropriate marketing claims** – the Code now bans any direct or indirect associations with sexual activity as well as preventing references to sexual success. It will also be prohibited for alcohol marketing to make claims about having therapeutic properties, such as being an aid to relaxation.

**Stronger protection under 18s** – images of people who are (or look like they are) under 25 cannot be

featured in a significant role or be seen drinking or holding alcohol. The under 25 rule is designed as a safety threshold to prevent under 18s identifying with adults in alcohol marketing and is consistent with the ASA advertising rules. (There will be some exceptions for winners of professional competitions such as Bar Tender of the Year.)

**To cover alcohol marketing and social media** – most social media activity, including user-generated content adopted by a producer as part of their own marketing, is subject to the ASA rules. The PG Code will continue to cover any online content that is not subject to the ASA rules such as public relations materials and blogs and user generated content which is not adopted by the producer.

**To promote low and lower alcohol alternatives** – producers can now draw attention to products which are below the average strength of similar drinks previously disallowed under the old strength rule. This change will support industry's pledge under the Government's Responsibility Deal to remove 1 billion units from the alcohol market by introducing and promoting new low and lower alcohol ranges.

**To introduce a UK wide Sponsorship Code** – there will be a new UK wide Code for sponsorship which will require producers to promote responsible drinking as an integral part of any sponsorship – work is ongoing to develop the detail of this Code which is expected to be completed by Spring 2013.

## New powers to spread the cost of drink fuelled crime

New powers to help pay the UK's estimated £11bn a year bill for alcohol-related crime and disorder came into effect on 30 October 2012.

The measures will give local authorities the opportunity to ensure those selling alcohol help pay towards the costs of cleaning up and policing the effects of excessive drinking in towns and cities across the country, as well as restricting the sale of alcohol in the early hours.

Late night levy gives local authorities discretion to:

charge a levy for late night licences to contribute to the costs linked to late night drinking, such as extra policing and street cleaning

introduce an Early Morning Restriction Order (EMRO) to restrict the sale of alcohol between midnight and 6am.

The new measures form part of the Government's Alcohol Strategy. Both powers have been introduced as part of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 and estimates suggest that these measures could generate approximately £17m per year in England in Wales, with at least 70% of that figure going to police and the remainder to local authorities.

Premises contributing towards programmes such as the Community Alcohol partnership (CAP) will pay 30% less levy.

## UK Alcohol Awareness Week: It's time to talk about drinking

Alcohol Concern has set the theme 'it's time to talk about drinking' for Alcohol Awareness Week which runs from 19-25 November. One of the nation's defining features is that people love to talk about drinking – but are we having the right kind of conversation? This year's theme gives the opportunity to have all kinds of conversations about the health risks, social problems, stigmas and taboos associated with talking about the dangers of alcohol. Conversation starter cards have been produced to stimulate conversation in these areas

One of the main ways Alcohol Concern are trying to start the conversation is by challenging people to give up alcohol for a month in January. From AAW people will be able to sign up either as an individual or a team

### Video clip explains units in the UK

Drinkaware have created a new video clip that gives an overview of what a unit is in the UK, how alcohol affects the body and why consumers should stay within the recommended limits.

[www.drinkaware.co.uk/alcohol-and-you/health/guide-to-alcohol-units-and-measures](http://www.drinkaware.co.uk/alcohol-and-you/health/guide-to-alcohol-units-and-measures)



### National Pubwatch Conference

The National Pubwatch Conference to be held in Birmingham, 12 March 2013 will examine the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 and the Government's Alcohol Strategy to look in detail at the legislation and how to implement responsible retailing. To see a draft programme of the conference and register go to:

[www.nationalpubwatch.org.uk/events](http://www.nationalpubwatch.org.uk/events)

to give up drinking for a month and people are being asked to pledge money or get sponsored to motivate them to stick at the challenge. Tips and information on cutting down and how this will help their health, sleeping patterns and general wellbeing are also being provided.



[www.alcoholconcern.org.uk/campaign/alcohol-awareness-week](http://www.alcoholconcern.org.uk/campaign/alcohol-awareness-week)

### Change4Life launches smartphone drinks tracker app

A new smartphone app and enhanced online drinks checker are now available to help people see the impact alcohol can have on their health, waist and wallet.

The new tools are part of a nationwide Change4Life campaign to raise awareness of the health impacts of drinking over the lower risk guidelines on a regular basis.

The campaign also offers handy hints and tips on how people can cut down – such as having alcohol free days, not drinking at home before they go out, swapping to low alcohol or alcohol free drinks and simply using smaller glasses



[www.nhs.uk/change4life/Pages/change-for-life.aspx](http://www.nhs.uk/change4life/Pages/change-for-life.aspx)

## Substance misuse among young people 2011–12 in England

A report by the National Treatment Agency for Substance Misuse states that the number of under-18s being treated for substance misuse in England has fallen each year from a peak of 24,053 in the financial year 2008/09 to 20,688 in 2011/12. The drop in numbers seems to represent a genuine fall in demand, reflecting falling drug use among the general population of young people.

Those receiving help primarily for heroin and other opiates fell to 211, to about a quarter the level of six years ago. At 3%, the proportion of young people being treated primarily for these and other drugs in class A (the most serious) of the Misuse of Drugs Act was almost a third the proportion five years ago, with numbers falling from a peak of 2050 in 2007/8 to 631. In the previous year the only drug category to increase in numbers (from 256 to 639) was the amphetamines, probably because the figures included mephedrone, which was made a controlled drug in 2010, so is now included in these statistics. In this latest year though the figure fell back to 493.

The number of under-18s accessing services for problems with cannabis rose to a record 13,200 in 2011/12, despite falls in use among the general population. For alcohol numbers fell from 7054 in the previous year to 5884.

Most of the young patients (80%) were living with their parents or other relatives, about half were in mainstream education.

[www.nta.nhs.uk/uploads/yp2012vfinal.pdf](http://www.nta.nhs.uk/uploads/yp2012vfinal.pdf)

## Providing awareness of buying by proxy



A local initiative TAPP is drawing attention to buying by proxy - what it means and what the penalties are.

For more information about the law and the implications of buying alcohol on behalf of

under 18's (proxy purchasing).

[www.tapp-project.org](http://www.tapp-project.org)

Why Not, If they ask you nicely?

Would you buy it if you felt unnerved by kids in the street who asked you to get booze for them?

Do you want to buy for your underage mates because you are over 18?

How does an £80.00 on the spot fine sound?

How about a criminal conviction and a £5000 fine?

How will you feel if the young person you buy for is injured as a result of drinking the alcohol you buy?

What if that young person causes harm to someone else?

Do your friends & neighbours object to the activities of drunken kids in your area?

How will they feel about you if your case appears in the press?

What response would you expect applying for a job with a criminal conviction to your name?

Did you know that a criminal conviction can make foreign travel more difficult?

## France plans beer tax increase

France is planning a substantial tax increases on beer, which could hit brewers across Western Europe. President François Hollande is pushing through legislation to increase taxes by 160%. The tax would affect local brews and the 30% of imported beer the French drink. Belgium and Germany could be the worst affected by the new legislation.

The French brewer's federation Brasseurs de France said the tax hike would see the price of beer increase by about 20% in bars and supermarkets and the industry fears the move will set a precedent and some of the other 26 EU nations will do the same.

Pierre-Olivier Bergeron, head of the Brewers of Europe said: "Immediately, it obviously becomes a very big issue for the brewing sector. This measure will affect all brewers, including small entrepreneurs."

Central and southern France are predominantly wine country, and overall beer only represents 16% of the country's alcoholic drinks market. However the Brewers of Europe said in a statement that beer is "being singled out" compared to wine. "This is a very short-sighted approach by penalising one sector." Bergeron added that he believes that is because the French government is reluctant to raise tax on the country's favourite alcoholic drink.

## The 2nd National Emergency Department survey of Alcohol Identification and Intervention activity

An insight report by Alcohol Research UK on the results of the 2011 National Emergency Department survey of alcohol identification and brief advice activity show that, compared to the earlier 2006 survey, levels of screening, provision of help/ advice and access to AHW / CNS services have all increased significantly. The report concludes that departments are beginning to identify local alcohol 'champions', and this is associated with an increase in the provision of training in both identification and brief intervention. 70.5% of all EDs recorded an alcohol related attendance in the patients notes, with 74.8% informing the patients GP about such attendances. Every department offers help or advice for patients who might have an alcohol problem (100.0%). The help/ advice provided by about half (53.0%) of all departments was a referral to their own 'in house' specialist team, with 28.5% referring patients to an external agency. Some department staff provided an intervention themselves as either a leaflet (19.2%) or 'Brief Advice' (6.0%).

The majority of departments had access to either Alcohol Health Workers or Clinical Nurse Specialists (71.8%) – most of these were based on-site (74.8%). Three quarters (76.7%) of departments had a separate area for patients under 18 years old. Most did ask young people about their alcohol consumption (82.0%) but few did so routinely (8.9%). Intoxication was the most frequently cited reason for a young person's alcohol related ED attendance (55.6%). Evenings (46.4%) and weekends (45.0%) were the most likely times for young people to present to the ED with an alcohol related presentation. The increased use of formal

alcohol screening measures, often applied routinely, suggests that English Emergency Departments are beginning to maximise the likelihood of identifying those patients who may benefit from further help or advice about their alcohol consumption. The four fold increase in access to specialist services for such patients should serve to also ensure that those who require help are exposed to interventions that are both effective and cost effective. The authors conclude therefore that alcohol no longer represents a missed opportunity in the ED

<http://alcoholresearchuk.org/2012/11/02/the-2nd-national-emergency-department-survey-of-alcohol-identification-and-intervention-activity/>

Alcohol related presentations among under 18's - frequency		Total % (n=151)		Valid % (n=131)	
Presentation	Intoxication	84		55.6	64.1
Assault		39	25.8	29.8	
DSH		31	20.5	23.7	
Collapse		42	27.8	32.1	
Head Injury		28	18.5	21.4	
Fall		19	12.6	14.5	
Occasion	Other	37		24.5	28.2
Holidays		11	7.3	8.4	
Evenings		70	46.4	53.4	
Weekends		68	45.0	51.9	

## Alcohol ban on Scottish trains a success

Scotland's largest train operator says its new policy on curtailing alcohol consumption has been a success. ScotRail introduced a ban on alcohol between 9pm and 10am three months ago and only five passengers have been reported to the Procurator Fiscal since its introduction. The company became the first rail operator in the UK to introduce the outright ban.

The restrictions, which do not apply to its sleeper services, are in line with the Scottish Government's

drive to reduce alcohol consumption and curb anti-social behaviour. The rail firm has also refused travel to a number of passengers that have arrived at stations intoxicated.

Steve Montgomery, ScotRail's managing director, said: "The ban has been working well, which is partly down to the softly, softly approach we have adopted, but also we shouldn't underestimate the contribution of the travelling public".

## Choices for Life website launch

'Choices for Life' is a new website aimed at all 11-18 year olds, teachers, youth workers and parents/carers in Scotland. The website provides information on issues such as drugs, alcohol, tobacco and internet safety.

Funded by Scottish Government and organised and developed by the Scottish Crime and Drug Enforcement Agency (SCDEA), since 2005 the programme has evolved from live events across the country into a digital format with opportunities to reach a much larger audience. The SCDEA teamed up with Young Scot to develop the website allowing young people to be engaged throughout the process ensuring that the website became a true youth-led, co-designed interactive hub.

To support education further, in conjunction with Education Scotland and Glow, Choices for Life will be delivering a series of live broadcasts. The first of these will be on the 7th November for primary 7 pupils. Presented by radio DJ Mark Martin the audience will watch a specially commissioned drama tackling issues around negative peer pressure and smoking and afterwards have the opportunity for live interaction with invited specialists using Glow chat.

<http://choicesforlifeonline.org>



## Growth of low alcohol beer sales in Chile

In March 2012 legislation that was introduced in Chile, known as the zero tolerance bill, reduced permitted alcohol levels for drivers to 0.3% per litre. Since then, consumers have been seeking out alternative products, including alcohol free beers. Local brewery Cerveza Cristal predicts that non-alcoholic beers could represent up to 5% of the beer market in the medium term. At present, they correspond to 1% of the market overall, although a surge in sales was reported when the legislation was introduced, with many supermarkets reportedly running out of stock.

## Scotland requests more drink-drive powers from UK government

MSPs have voted overwhelmingly to back the Scottish Government's plan to cut the drink-drive limit from 80mg of alcohol per 100ml to 50mg. At the end of October, MSPs debated the Scottish government's proposals to lower the limit, which has received the support of the three main opposition parties and is currently the subject of a public consultation.

MSPs voted by 100 to 12 in favour of changing the limit and seeking powers to implement additional measures. Justice secretary Kenny MacAskill suggested up to half the average 30 deaths a year caused by drink-driving could be saved if the limit was reduced.

Conservative transport spokesman Alex Johnstone said the lower limit could have unintended consequences. "The people who are drinking and driving and causing many of the accidents, injuries and deaths are people who are already two or three or five times over the legal limit as it stands today... reducing the limit could result in the police shifting their attention away from this group to others who could be just over any new drink-driving limit".

The Scottish government was given new powers to do so in July to lower the limit, but Justice Secretary Kenny MacAskill argues that more powers over drink-driving should be devolved to Scotland.

Mr MacAskill has asked the UK transport secretary for the transfer of powers in areas such as random testing and tougher measures for young drivers.

Cerveza Cristal has registered double digit growth for its alcohol free beer Cristal Cero since it was launched in 2008. Growth of up to 300% in this segment has been reported since the new law came in. During 2011, a total of 0.4mn litres of non-alcoholic beer was consumed in Chile, according to Euromonitor, compared to Mexico and Venezuela, at 11.4mn litres and 6.5mn litres respectively. Beer consumption in Chile is about 680mn litres, with consumption per capita at 40 litres per year.

## Student washroom campaign launched in Ireland

Life-size floor vinyls of an unconscious young man and young woman will form the core of drinkaware.ie's latest student campaign, targeting University College Cork and Cork Institute of Technology students in the bathrooms of their on-campus bars. These images are accompanied by a poster, showing hundreds of Facebook 'likes' next to the vinyl images, which reminds students that an embarrassing night out can live on forever thanks to social media: "What happens here doesn't stay here. Pace yourself," the poster reads.

Speaking about the initiative, drinkaware.ie Chief Executive Fionnuala Sheehan said, "We first launched these floor vinyls in 2010 as part of a broader student campaign. The response we got from students on the effectiveness of this initiative was very positive, with many students saying that it made them stop and think about their drinking."

"On a night out, students will invariably pay a visit to the bathroom. It is here, away from the party atmosphere, that you often start to really notice the effects of alcohol. The floor vinyls are a reminder to students that this could be how their night will end if they don't pace themselves. The inclusion of 'likes' in the accompanying poster is another reminder that

with the increasing popularity of social media, images such as these don't get left in the bathroom."

Niamh Hayes, Vice-President and Welfare Officer for CIT, voiced a similar opinion: "Drinking too much on a regular basis has long-term effects on students, including causing them to struggle with their college work and affecting their physical health as well as their mental health. I am hoping that this drinkaware.ie campaign will hit home with students and encourage them to take it that little bit easier on nights out."

The floor vinyls have already been rolled out in both Dublin and Limerick. The floor vinyls are one element of a larger student campaign delivered by drinkaware.ie on campuses throughout Ireland.



## A quarter of motorists drive 'after one drink' in Ireland

The annual Road Safety Monitor survey in Northern Ireland found that almost 72% of respondents opposed drinking and driving. However more than a quarter of motorists are still drive after having one drink.

Road Safety Minister Alex Attwood said that even one drink was too many. "These figures concern me. At present more than a quarter of drivers are taking a risk by driving after having one drink," he said. "Even small amounts of alcohol impair driving, so thinking that you can have one drink and drive safely isn't

realistic... There has been a lot of work done over a number of years to make drink driving unacceptable and now we need a further behaviour change."

Mr Attwood said that consultation had just finished on a draft Bill to lower drink drive limits and new powers for roadside checkpoints where all drivers could be asked to take a breath test.

The Bill will also introduce an effectively zero limit of 20mg/100ml for novice drivers within their first two years of driving.

## Evaluation of EU strategy on alcohol and health

An Independent contractor funded by the European Commission will assess overall added value of the strategy, including (a) assessment of the Committee on National Alcohol Policy (CNAPA) (b) assessment of the European Alcohol and Health Forum (c) assessment of the overall EU alcohol strategy process.

A final report is planned for end 2012 and will be based on research and interviews with members of the EAHF and CNAPA; conclusions are likely to lead to decisions on EU action on alcohol and health after 2012.

## German Teenage drinking down - but still high

The number of teenagers regularly drinking excessively is dropping, according to new figures, although around 700,000 binge drink once a month. Researchers for the federal health promotion authority (BZgA) found that just over 15% of German teenagers between 12 and 17 years drank five or more alcoholic drinks in one night at least once in the last month.

The figures were released to try to determine how effective a government campaign to limit excessive teen drinking had been. The campaign, 'Alkohol? Know your limit', was launched three years ago in an attempt to encourage sensible drinking. A year before the campaign started, the share of teenagers who said they drank five alcoholic drinks or more once a month or more, was 20.4%, indicating that the campaign has helped ensure that almost 80% of young Germans do not binge drink monthly.

However, regular drinking was up among 12- to 17-year-olds, with 39.8% saying they drank some alcohol at least once a week. This was the highest share since 2008 – although in 1973 the figure was 67.1%.

Young men provided significant cause for concern, with around 20% aged between 12 and 17 saying they had drunk more than five drinks in one night during the previous month – and more than 50% of those between 18 and 25. Their rate of risky drinking was twice that of young women of the same age.



## Denmark annual fall anti-drinking campaign underway

The Danish national health board, Sundhedsstyrelsen, has been running an annual fall campaign with print, TV and billboard ads to promote moderate drinking and encouragement to participate in a national day of abstaining on October 11 ([www.saetproppen.dk](http://www.saetproppen.dk))

The warnings highlight the risks of combining alcohol and smoking and the problems of children with alcoholic parents.

Last year, the World Health Organisation (WHO) published figures showing that Denmark's alcohol consumption has been among the highest in Europe for the past 30 years. Those numbers include nearly 600,000 Danes who are 'problem drinkers' according to Sundhedsstyrelsen.

As a way of supporting the campaign, Sundhedsstyrelsen asked that the public to 'Stick a Cork in it' on Thursday, October 11th and completely abstain from drinking.



## Mexico: National Addiction Survey release results for 2011

According to the 2011 National Addiction Survey (ENA 2011) in Mexico, during 2008, a total of 61.3% of Mexicans aged between 12-65 years old had consumed alcohol, rising to 71.3% during 2011, whilst the overall number of people with alcohol dependency rose from 5% in 2008 to 6.2% in 2011. Alcohol consumption amongst adolescents rose from 31.7% in 2008 to 42.9% during 2011, whilst alcohol dependency in this age bracket rose from 2.7% to

4.1% in this same period. ENA 2011 has discovered that the most popular alcoholic drink in the country is beer, followed by liquors such as brandy, tequila, rum, whisky, cognac and vodka. The central and northern Mexican regions are the most affected, whilst alcohol consumption is lowest in the south. Alcohol dependency rates amongst men have increased from 8.3% in 2002 to 10.8% in 2011, whilst amongst women, the levels have risen from 0.6% to 1.8%.

## A good host should never be too generous

Éduc'alcool has issued its new Hosting Know-How guide, containing the "real" rules for responsible hosting.

*"It's anything but easy to change long-standing habits, such as what people consider the right way to be a generous host, but that is the challenge Éduc'alcool has taken on"* said Director General, Hubert Sacy, but unfortunately, the current entertaining culture in Quebec features different sets of rules for food and alcohol. For example, you'll never see a host forcing seconds on guests who still have food on their plates. But why do so many people feel it imperative to refill a glass when only a sip has been taken? The gesture is motivated by generosity, no doubt, but it is sadly misplaced. *"If people say they've had enough, the polite and attentive host does not insist. When it comes to alcohol, no really must mean no,"* adds Sacy.

Tips in Hosting Know-How include:

Always provide non-alcoholic beverages. Drinking alcohol should never be seen as an obligation, and providing a variety of beverages shows respect for your guests

Always serve food, even with cocktails. Never let

people drink on an empty stomach.

Make sure guests have somewhere to set down their drinks. It has been shown that people tend to drink more when they have to hold their glasses all the time.

Hosts should not drink too much. Better to keep a clear head and stay in control.

Serve standard drinks (defined in the guide) and use a jigger for measuring. Never fill glasses to the rim.

The Éduc'alcool hosting guide and a funny movie summarising the publication's advice, can also be watched on Educ'alcool website.

<http://educalcool.qc.ca/en/facts-tips-and-tools/tips/responsible-hosting>



## New Jersey assembly seeks to up penalties for drunk driving parents

The New Jersey Assembly is considering a bill that would increase the penalties for getting in a drunk driving accident with children in the car.

The bill, which was approved by the Assembly Law and Public Safety committee in late September, seeks to impose new penalties for drunk driving parents or guardians who cause accidents that injure their minor children. If the bill is passed, causing such an accident would become a fourth-degree crime. Applicable penalties could include a fine of up to \$10,000 and 18 months in prison. If the accident causes serious injury to a minor child, the violation becomes a third-degree crime. Penalties for third-degree crimes include fines of up to \$15,000 and three to five years in prison.

If the bill passes, these heightened penalties would be imposed in addition to the penalties for the underlying DUI crime. The penalties for a first-offense DUI in New Jersey depend on the driver's blood alcohol concentration. Drivers whose BAC is between 0.08 and 0.10 face up to 30 days in prison, 12 to 48 hours in the intoxicated driver resource center (IDRC), a fine of up to \$400 and a three-month loss of driving privileges. Drivers whose BAC is 0.10 or higher are subject to higher fines and a possible one-year suspension of driving privileges. In addition, judges may elect to require drivers with BACs less than 0.15 to use ignition interlock devices. Interlocks are mandatory for drivers whose BAC was 0.15 or higher.

## Drink drive social media campaign in Victoria, Australia

Victoria's Transport Accident Commission is set to launch a social media campaign next month, which will try to use teen peer pressure to discourage risky driving. The new social media campaign called 'Home Safe', will be launched in the Christmas season and will call on teens to produce their own road safety slogans, specifically targeted intervention-style at their friends. For example, digital roadside signs would tweet personal messages for people known to be driving along that road.

The TAC spent almost \$49 million last financial year on its road safety campaigns and activities. Its head of road safety and marketing, John Thompson, said the campaigns mostly target young men, because they are the most over-represented age group in the crash statistics.

Opposition roads spokesman Luke Donnellan said recruiting teenagers to spread road safety messages was a good strategy. "It takes kids to get through to kids," Mr Donnellan said. "Adults are probably a bit out of touch with what resonates with kids."

## Health survey shows Australians drink and smoke less, but are heavier

First results from the Australian Health Survey have mixed news; smoking rates continue to fall, as do rates of drinking at risky levels, but the number of people who are overweight and obese continues to rise. Dr Paul Jelfs, Chief statistician said the 2011-12 Australian Health Survey was the largest check up on the nation's health ever undertaken. The main findings are:

- In 2011-12 55.6% of all Australians aged 15 years and over considered themselves to be in very good or excellent health, while 4.0% rated their health as poor.
- Rates of daily smoking have continued to drop to 2.8 million people (16.3%) aged 18 years and over in 2011-12 from 18.9% in 2007-08 and 22.4% in 2001.
- The proportion of people aged 18 years and over who consumed more than two standard drinks

per day on average, exceeding the National Health and Medical Research Council low risk guidelines, decreased to 19.5% in 2011-12 from 20.9% in 2007-08.

- 44.7% of people aged 18 years and over consumed more than four standard drinks at least once in the past year.
- Prevalence of overweight and obesity in adults aged 18 years and over has continued to rise to 63.4% in 2011-12 from 61.2% in 2007-08 and 56.3% in 1995.
- However the prevalence of overweight and obesity in children aged 5-17 has remained stable at 25.3% in 2011-12.

<http://apo.org.au/research/menzies-nous-australian-health-survey-2012>

## New Zealand Girls overtake boys for binge drinking

Senior secondary school girls in New Zealand are now bigger binge drinkers than their male counterparts, according to a health report into the country's drinking habits.

The report into the female drinking culture was released at an alcohol harm conference in Auckland in November. The percentage of females aged 16 and 17 binge-drinking on a typical night out tripled from 9 to 28% between 1995 and 2011. For males of the same age, the percentage increased from 19 to 25%. Binge-drinking has dropped among 18 and 19-year-old males from 30 to 29%, but for females in this age

group, the proportion of binge-drinkers increased from 4 to 16%.

Alcohol Healthwatch director Rebecca Williams said teenage girls who were binge-drinking risked establishing bad drinking habits for life, but little was being done to help female problem drinkers. She called for greater preventative measures, including screening women for drinking problems at GP clinics and hospitals.

The report was presented at the Harm to Harmony conference Waipuna Conference Centre Auckland New Zealand 13-14 November 2012

## Retailers to tackle alcohol and pregnancy education in Australia

Major liquor retailers nationally have banded together to educate Australians on alcohol and pregnancy with the message 'It is safest not to drink alcohol while pregnant' through point of sale education materials.

In a joint initiative between the Australian Government's Department of Health and Ageing and DrinkWise Australia launched in October, major liquor retailers will include educational literature with alcohol purchases to increase consumer awareness and understanding on the risks of women drinking alcohol while pregnant. Participating retailers include Aldi, BWS, Cellarbrations, Dan Murphy's, First Choice, IGA Liquor, Liquorland, The Bottle-O, Thirsty Camel, Woolworths Liquor and Vintage Cellars.

DrinkWise Australia Chair, Hon. Trish Worth, thanked the retailers for their participation in the initiative and said the message was an important one as it helped answer the question around consumption of alcohol for pregnant and breastfeeding women.

*"There is much confusion about alcohol and pregnancy. Medical experts don't actually know*

*what is the lowest possible level of alcohol that can be drunk safely, so their advice is the safest possible thing that women can do is to not drink alcohol at all during pregnancy".*

This initiative follows the DrinkWise launch last year of information messages to appear on the labels of alcohol products in Australia and a partnership with the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists to promote the risks of alcohol and pregnancy.

*"DrinkWise and the liquor retailers recognise that labelling alone is not enough, which is why education around these issues is so important,"* said Ms Worth. *"Practical resources such as this brochure will provide further information to the community and help couples make an informed choice."*

The brochure encourages consumers to get the facts from the DrinkWise website [www.drinkwise.org.au/pregnancy](http://www.drinkwise.org.au/pregnancy) which provides expert advice from Professor Alec Welsh, Head of Maternal-Fetal Medicine, Royal Hospital for Women, Sydney and a Fellow of the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists.

## World Health Organisation updates

### European Alcohol Action Plan

The World Health Organisation's European Alcohol Action Plan (EAAP) 2012-2020 is designed to implement the Global Alcohol Strategy adopted by the World Health Assembly.

In parallel, the UN/WHO Action Plan for Prevention and Control of Non Communicable Diseases (NCDs) is being developed.

The UK European Alcohol Action Plan document and the "Health 2020 Resolution" was adopted in September 2012. The initial draft included a target of 10% reduction in alcohol consumption. The adopted resolution has no references to target setting.

### Global Monitoring Framework

WHO Member States have agreed on the first ever global monitoring framework to fight Noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) during a meeting in November in Geneva. The overall global voluntary target is to reduce by 2025 premature death and mortality due to NCDs by 25%.

NCDs, also known as chronic diseases, are of long duration and generally slow progression causing a considerable cost to the public expenditure. World Economic Forum and Harvard School of Public Health estimated that NCDs will cause economic output loss of US\$ 47 trillion over the next two decades. NCDs kill more than 36 million people each year of which 14 million are under the age of 70 years old.

The proposed framework includes 9 voluntary global targets and 25 indicators to prevent and control NCDs such as cardiovascular diseases, cancers, diabetes and chronic respiratory diseases.

The global monitoring framework will now be considered first by the WHO Executive Board during its 132nd session in January 2013 and then be submitted to the World Health Assembly in May 2013 for consideration and adoption.

**AIM – Alcohol in Moderation was founded in 1991 as an independent not for profit organisation whose role is to communicate “The Responsible Drinking Message” and to summarise and log relevant research, legislation, policy and campaigns regarding alcohol, health, social and policy issues.**

### **AIM Mission Statement**

- To work internationally to disseminate accurate social, scientific and medical research concerning responsible and moderate drinking
- To strive to ensure that alcohol is consumed responsibly and in moderation
- To encourage informed and balanced debate on alcohol, health and social issues
- To communicate and publicise relevant medical and scientific research in a clear and concise format, contributed to by AIM's Council of 20 Professors and Specialists
- To publish information via [www.alcoholinmoderation.com](http://www.alcoholinmoderation.com) on moderate drinking and health, social and policy issues – comprehensively indexed and fully searchable without charge
- To educate consumers on responsible drinking and related health issues via [www.drinkingandyou.com](http://www.drinkingandyou.com) and publications, based on national government guidelines enabling consumers to make informed choices regarding drinking
- To inform and educate those working in the beverage alcohol industry regarding the responsible production, marketing, sale and promotion of alcohol
- To distribute AIM Digest Online without charge to policy makers, legislators and researchers involved in alcohol issues
- To direct enquiries towards full, peer reviewed or referenced sources of information and statistics where possible
- To work with organisations, charities, companies and associations to create programmes, materials and policies built around the responsible consumption of alcohol.

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