AIM Alcohol in Moderation DIGEST ONLINE

INTERNATIONAL DIGEST PROMOTING THE RESPONSIBLE PROMOTION OF ALCOHOL

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Guernsey

In Guernsey, tax on tobacco, alcohol, fuel and property is set to rise above inflation in 2022 according to the latest States of Guernsey budget. Alcohol duties will rise by 4% - above a 2.5% anticipated inflation rate.

India

On October 1, all private liquor shops in Delhi closed for a 6 week period, as mandated by the new excise policy of the Delhi government.

Until November 16, only government-run liquor vends will be allowed to function and then, following the six week period, Delhi will complete its transition to the new excise policy, under which only those stores that have new licenses will be allowed to sell alcohol in the city.

With the new liquor policy, the Delhi government committed to the uniform distribution of liquor outlets in the city, including at least two air-conditioned vends in every municipal ward, five super-premium stores, and 10 stores at the Indira Gandhi International Airport. On the November 17 the Delhi government will completely cease selling liquor through its outlets such as the Delhi Consumer's Cooperative Wholesale Store Ltd and the Delhi State Industrial and Infrastructure Development Corporation.

US

In Ohio, a new anti-hazing statute with more severe penalties to those convicted of college hazing incidents, came into effect on October 7.

The new law makes hazing a 2nd degree misdemeanour and widens the scope of those who can be punished to include those who participate in or permit hazing.

In addition, the law requires the Ohio Department of Education to implement a statewide anti-hazing plan and staff and volunteers at universities will undergo specific training on hazing awareness and prevention.

In Carolina, Govenor Roy Cooper signed House Bill 890 into law, which modifies the existing alcohol laws to allow online orders at state owned Alcohol Beverage Control (ABC).

From Oct 1, patrons will be able to place online orders at ABC stores, so long as the goods are picked up by the person who made the order. Other changes include allowing the purchase of a second alcoholic beverage at college sporting events and revisions to current laws so that adult consumers are able to purchase alcoholic drinks on Sundays at distilleries and wineries across North Carolina.

The Bill also creates the possibility for cities to create social districts where people can buy, carry, and drink alcohol. The law says the districts are designated outdoor areas where people can drink alcohol sold by businesses with appropriate permits outside the barriers of outdoor seating on the business property.

Red wine high-molecular-weight polyphenolic complex: an emerging modulator of human metabolic disease risk and gut microbiota

Moderate red wine consumption has been linked to reduced chronic disease risk. Thus far, little is known about the physicochemical properties and potential biological effects of high-molecular-weight polyphenolic complexes, a major fraction of red wine polyphenols. In a paper published in the Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry, the stability and biochemical properties of high-molecular-weight polyphenolic complexes were studied under simulated gastrointestinal conditions in vitro.

The results showed that high-molecular-weight polyphenolic complexes were resistant to simulated gastric digestion (SGD) and simulated intestinal digestion (SID). They exhibited significant inhibitory activity against key metabolic syndrome-associated digestive enzymes, achieving 17.1-90.9% inhibition of pancreatic α-amylase, lipase, and cholesterol esterase at 0.02-0.45 mg/mL. High-molecular-weight polyphenolic complexes were metabolized by gut microbiota (GM), leading to significantly enhanced antioxidant capacity when compared with the original, SGD, and SID samples. Furthermore, they favourably modulated GM profiles, which was accompanied by significantly increased short-chain fatty acid generation during the early colonic fermentation phase.

These findings suggest that high-molecular-weight polyphenolic complexes are a promising modulator of human metabolic disease risk, the authors argue.

Source: Suo H, Shishir MRI, Xiao J, Wang M, Chen F, Cheng KW. Red Wine High-Molecular-Weight Polyphenolic Complex: An Emerging Modulator of Human Metabolic Disease Risk and Gut Microbiota. J Agric Food Chem. 2021 Sep 22;69(37):10907-10919. doi.org/10.1021/acs.jafc.1c03158.

Alcohol drinking in one's thirties and forties is associated with body mass index in men, but not in women

A study investigated longitudinal associations between alcohol drinking and body mass index (BMI).

Alcohol drinking (exposure), BMI (outcome), smoking habit, occupation, longstanding illness, and leisure time physical activity (potential confounders) were assessed at ages 30, 34, 42, and 46 in the 1970 British Birth Cohort Study. There were 15,708 observations in 5,931 men and 14,077 observations in 5,656 women.

Drinking was associated with BMI in men. According to the regression coefficients, BMI was expected to increase by 0.36 (95% confidence interval: 0.11, 0.60) kg/m2 per year in men who drank once a week and by 0.40 (0.14, 0.15) kg/m2 per year in men who drank most days. In ten years, BMI was expected to increase by 5.4 kg/m2 in men who drank and by 2.9 kg/m2 in men who drank and were physically active.

Drinking was not associated with BMI in women. Rather, BMI was expected to increase by 0.25 (0.07, 0.43) kg/m2 per year in women who were former smokers. In ten years, BMI was expected to increase by 4.3 kg/m2 in women who were former smokers and by 0.8 kg/m2 in women who were former smokers and who were physically active. Associations between drinking and BMI were similar after further adjustment for problematic drinking and diet.

These longitudinal data suggest that drinking is associated with BMI in men and that drinking is not associated with BMI in women independent of other lifestyle risk factors.

Source: Gary O'Donovan, Elif Inan-Eroglu, Emmanuel Stamatakis, Mark Hamer, Alcohol drinking in one's thirties and forties is associated with body mass index in men, but not in women: A longitudinal analysis of the 1970 British Cohort Study, Preventive Medicine, Volume 153, 2021. doi.org/10.1016/j.ypmed.2021.106811.

Are dietary patterns in early childhood associated with alcohol consumption at the age of 17?

An analysis examined the relationship between dietary patterns in early childhood and alcohol consumption in adolescence.

Data was obtained from the Avon Longitudinal Study of Children and Parents (ALSPAC) prospective cohort study. Dietary information was obtained using food frequency questionnaires at ages 3 and 7 years. The association between dietary patterns, derived using Principal Components Analysis (PCA) and the Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test (AUDIT) scores (to assess harmful intake) and frequency of alcohol consumption at 17 years were examined. Secondary analysis considered sugar intake as a percentage of total energy intake.

The analysis found that adherence to the "healthy" dietary pattern at both 3 and 7 years of age was positively associated with consuming more than one alcoholic drink per week at 17 years, whilst adherence to the 'traditional' dietary pattern at both ages was protective of harmful alcohol intake at 17. Sugar intake was not associated with either alcohol outcome after adjustment for ethnicity, maternal level of education, parental social class and maternal AUDIT score.

For the population studied, changes to diet in early childhood are unlikely to have an impact on harmful alcohol use in adolescence given the lack of consistency across the results, the study authors conclude.

Source: Yorke K, Northstone K, Jones L. Are dietary patterns in early childhood associated with alcohol consumption at the age of 17? Analysis of data from the Avon Longitudinal Study of Children and Parents (ALSPAC) prospective cohort study. Public Health Nutr. 2021 Oct 6:1-30. doi.org/10.1017/S1368980021004183.

Effect of red wine or its polyphenols on induced apical periodontitis in rats

A research team evaluated the effect of red wine consumption or its polyphenols on the inflammation/resorption processes associated with apical periodontitis in rats.

Thirty-two three-month-old Wistar rats had apical periodontitis induced in four first molars and were then arranged into four groups: control (C)-rats with apical periodontitis; wine (W)-rats with apical periodontitis receiving 4.28 ml/kg of red wine; resveratrol+quercetin (R+Q)-rats with apical periodontitis receiving 4.28 ml/kg of a solution containing 1.00 mg/L of quercetin and 0.86 mg/L of resveratrol and alcohol (ALC)-rats with apical periodontitis receiving the alcoholic dose contained in the wine. The oral gavage treatments were administered daily, from day 0 to day 45. On the 15th day, apical periodontitis was induced, and on the 45th day, the animals were euthanised. Histological, immunohistochemical (RANKL, OPG, TRAP, IL-10, TNF-α and IL-1β) and micro-computed tomography for bone resorption analysis were performed in the jaws.

The median score of the inflammatory process was significantly lower in the resveratrol+quercetin group compared to the Control group and the Alcohol group, and not different from the Wine group.

The immunolabeling for OPG was significantly higher in the resveratrol+quercetin group compared to all groups; the same was observed for IL-10, different from groups C and ALC. The resveratrol+quercetin group had the lowest TRAP cell count followed by the Wine group, both inferior to Control group and Alcohol group. The lowest bone resorption value was in the resveratrol+quercetin group significantly lower than the Control group. The Wine group and resveratrol+quercetin group had less bone resorption compared to the Alcohol group.

The study results demonstrate that red wine administration to rats for 15 days before induction of apical periodontitis decreased inflammation, TRAP marking and periapical bone resorption compared to alcohol. Resveratrol-quercetin administration reduced the inflammatory process in apical periodontitis, periapical bone resorption, and altered the OPG, IL-10 and TRAP expression compared to the control group and the alcohol group.

Source: Dal-Fabbro R, Cosme-Silva L, Rezende Silva Martins de Oliveira F, Capalbo LC, Plazza FA, Ervolino E, Cintra LTA, Gomes-Filho JE. Effect of red wine or its polyphenols on induced apical periodontitis in rats. Int Endod J. 2021 Sep 17. Doi.org/10.1111/iej.13633.

A limitation of genetic epidemiological analysis when associations are genuinely J-shaped

A paper published in The Lancet in 2019 received wide media coverage when it reported that even light drinking patterns increased blood pressure and the chances of having a stroke. The study, based on 500,000 people, used mendelian analysis to counter previous claims that one or two drinks a day could in fact be protective.

In an editorial published in the International Journal of Epidemiology Sir Nicholas Wald, of University College London, and Chris Frost, of the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, claim that the 2019 analysis was flawed.

Wald and Frost created a hypothetical population in which there was a genuine J-shaped relationship, and then applied the genetic epidemiological analysis used in the 2019 paper. It failed to uncover the J-shaped relationship.

Wald and Frost comment "We conclude that the observation in many studies that light drinking reduces the risk of stroke but heavier drinking increases it, is not necessarily disproved by the genetic analysis of Millwood and colleagues.

"It is important for public health policy that the true relationship between alcohol consumption and vascular disease is recognized."

Source: Chris Frost, Nicholas Wald, A limitation of genetic epidemiological analysis when associations are genuinely J-shaped illustrated using a prospective study of alcohol consumption and vascular disease, International Journal of Epidemiology, 2021. doi.org/10.1093/ije/dyab162.

Factors associated with stroke among patients with type 2 diabetes

A study examined the prevalence of stroke and associated factors of stroke in patients with type 2 diabetes (T2DM). The study participants were over 18,000 T2DM patients in China.

The researchers found that smoking (OR = 1.60, 95%CI), hypertension (OR = 2.96), dyslipidemia (OR = 2.00), family history of stroke (OR = 2.02), obesity (OR = 1.21) and sleep duration < 6 h/day (OR = 1.44) or > 8 h/day (OR = 1.22 were positively associated with stroke, whereas drinking 1-3 days/week (OR = 0.64) or daily (OR = 0.45), effective exercise (OR = 0.65) and underweight (OR = 0.30) were negatively related to stroke.

The risk of stroke increased substantially with accumulation of above seven modified risk factors. The odds ratio values of stroke in patients having ≥ 5 of the above seven risk factors was 14.39.

The researchers conclude that the prevalence of stroke was high among patients with type 2 diabetes in China. It is of great significance to strengthen comprehensive management of health-related behaviours including smoking cessation, moderate alcohol consumption, effective exercise, 6-8 h of sleep duration, keeping normal weight and the prevention of hypertension and dyslipidemia to have sustained beneficial effects on improvements of stroke risk factors.

Source: He C, Wang W, Chen Q, Shen Z, Pan E, Sun Z, Lou P, Zhang X. Factors associated with stroke among patients with type 2 diabetes mellitus in China: a propensity score matched study. Acta Diabetol. 2021 Nov;58(11):1513-1523. doi.org/10.1007/s00592-021-01758-y.

Alcohol consumption and the risk of rosacea

Rosacea, a chronic inflammatory skin disease that affects people's life quality, has been found to be related to many detrimental factors including ultraviolet exposure. The association between alcohol consumption and rosacea has long been debated. A systematic review and meta-analysis was conducted to elucidate this association.

Following a systematic search of the literature published before February 16, 2021 on PubMed, Embase, and the Cochrane database. 14 eligible studies were identified, and alcohol consumption was not found to be a risk factor for rosacea. However, there are 4 types of rosacea and in subgroup analysis, alcohol consumption increased the risk of phymatous rosacea (PhR) and the pooled OR was 4.17 (95% CI = 1.76-9.91).

Overall, the study showed that alcohol consumption was a risk factor in phymatous rosacea (PhR), but not the other 3 sub types. More studies of rosacea investigating sex distribution, alcohol intake levels, and types of alcoholic beverages consumed are needed, the authors say.

Source: Liu L, Xue Y, Chen Y, Pu Y, Zhang Y, Zhang L, Shao X, Chen J, Chen J. Alcohol consumption and the risk of rosacea: A systematic review and meta-analysis. J Cosmet Dermatol. 2021 Sep 28. doi.org/10.1111/jocd.14483.

Relationship between alcohol consumption and insulin resistance

Some studies have suggested that low level alcohol consumption improves insulin resistance. Researchers evaluated the effects of alcohol consumption on insulin resistance using the homeostatic model assessment for insulin resistance (HOMA-IR).

The study included 280,194 people without diabetes who underwent comprehensive health examinations more than twice between 2011 and 2018. The mean age of the study subjects was 38.2 years and 55.7% were men. The levels of alcohol intake were obtained through a self-questionnaire. All subjects were divided into two groups based on the Korean standard cut-off value of HOMA-IR, 2.2. The risk of insulin resistance according to alcohol consumption was assessed.

During the follow-up period (median 4.13 years), HOMA-IR progressed from <2.2 to ≥2.2 in 64,443 subjects (23.0%) and improved from ≥2.2 to <2.2 in 21,673 subjects (7.7%). In the parametric survival analysis, alcohol consumption was associated with improvement of HOMA-IR (HR [95% CI], 1.09, 1.11and 1.20, respectively). In the analysis classified according to changes in alcohol consumption amounts, increased alcohol consumption tended to prevent the progression of HOMA-IR (0.97). However, the association between the changes in alcohol consumption amounts and improvement of HOMA-IR was not statistically significant.

This retrospective observational study has shown that alcohol consumption can improve insulin resistance and increased alcohol consumption amounts may have preventive effects on the progression of HOMA-IR compared to the baseline level.

Source: Oh BK, Lee SJ, Kim H, Choi HI, Lee JY, Lee SH, Kim BJ, Kim BS, Kang JH, Lee MY, Sung KC. Relationship between alcohol consumption and insulin resistance measured using the homeostatic model assessment for insulin resistance: A retrospective cohort study of 280,194 people. Nutr Metab Cardiovasc Dis. 2021 Sep 22;31(10):2842-2850. doi.org/10.1016/j.numecd.2021.06.023.

Moderate dose alcohol protects against serum amyloid protein A1-induced endothelial dysfunction

Arterial endothelium plays a critical role in maintaining vessel homeostasis and preventing atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease (CVD). Low-to-moderate alcohol (EtOH) consumption is associated with reduced atherosclerosis and stimulates Notch signaling in endothelial cells. A study by researchers at the University of Rochester Medical Center explored whether EtOH protects the endothelium against serum amyloid A1 (SAA1)-induced activation/injury and investigated whether this protection is exclusively Notch-dependent.

Human coronary artery endothelial cells (HCAEC) were stimulated or not with "pro-atherogenic" SAA1 (1 μM) in the absence or presence of EtOH, the Notch ligand DLL4 (3 μg/ml), or the Notch inhibitor DAPT (20 μM).

EtOH stimulated Notch signaling in HCAEC, as evidenced by increased expression of the Notch receptor and hrt target genes. Treatment with EtOH alone or stimulation of Notch signaling by DLL4 increased eNOS activity and enhanced HCAEC barrier function as assessed by trans-endothelial electrical resistance. Moreover, EtOH and DLL4 both inhibited SAA1-induced monolayer leakiness, cell adhesion molecule (ICAM, VCAM) expression, and monocyte adhesion.

The effects of EtOH were Notch-dependent, as they were blocked with DAPT and by Notch receptor (N1, N4) knockdown. In contrast, EtOH's inhibition of SAA1-induced inflammatory cytokines (IL-6, IFN-γ) and reactive oxygen species (ROS) was Notch-independent, as these effects were unaffected by DAPT or by N1 and/or N4 knockdown.

The authors conclude that EtOH at moderate levels protects against SAA1-induced endothelial activation via both Notch-dependent and Notch-independent mechanisms. Alcohol's maintenance of endothelium in a nonactivated state would be expected to preserve vessel homeostasis and protect against atherosclerosis development.

Source: Rajendran, N. K., Liu, W., Chu, C. C., Cahill, P. A., & Redmond, E. M. (2021). Moderate dose alcohol protects against serum amyloid protein A1-induced endothelial dysfunction via both notch-dependent and notch-independent pathways. Alcoholism: Clinical and Experimental Research, 00, 1– 14. doi.org/10.1111/acer.14706.

Dietary and lifestyle habits of drinkers and alcoholic beverage preference

Although the detrimental effects of heavy drinking in terms of health are well-documented in the literature, there are inconsistent findings regarding the safety of light-to-moderate alcohol consumption. In particular, little is still known about the consumption of specific alcoholic beverages in combination with dietary habits and lifestyle, which in turn could influence health status.

A review published in the open access journal, Vine and Wine, summarises and critically evaluates the evidence of a relationship between preference for alcoholic beverages and consumer dietary and lifestyle habits.

A literature search identified 26 articles as suitable for inclusion in the review. The adherence to a healthier diet and lifestyle was generally observed in light-to-moderate alcohol consumers, especially when wine was the preferred beverage. Considering the potentially strong impact of drinking patterns on health and the risk of developing chronic diseases, the data summarised in this review highlight that alcoholic beverage preferences, drinking patterns, dietary patterns and lifestyle should be studied together.

Any future epidemiological studies should analyse the relationship between alcohol consumption and the above mentioned correlations with respect to impact on health.

Source: Kosti, R. I., Di Lorenzo, C., Panagiotakos, D. B., Sandeman, G., Frittella, N., Iasiello, B., Teissedre, P.-L. ., & Restani, P. (2021). Dietary and lifestyle habits of drinkers with preference for alcoholic beverage: does it really matter for public health? A review of the evidence. OENO One, 55(4). doi.org/10.20870/oeno-one.2021.55.4.4757

Heavy alcohol consumption and sleep quality

A study in China assessed the association between total alcohol intake, specific alcoholic beverages and sleep quality in a community-based cohort.

11 905 participants from the Kailuan community, China, who were free of a history of CVD, cancer, Parkinson's disease, dementia and head injury in or prior to 2012 were included in the study. Alcohol consumption (amount and frequency intake) and alcoholic beverage type were collected in 2006 (baseline) and 2012. Participants were grouped into non-, light- (women: 0-0·4 serving/d; men: 0-0·9 serving/d), moderate- (women: 0·5-1·0 serving/d; men: 1·0-2·0 servings/d) and heavy- (women: >1·0 servings/d; men: >2·0 servings/d) drinkers. Overall sleep quality was measured in 2012 and included four sleep parameters (insomnia, daytime sleepiness, sleep duration, snoring/obstructive sleep apnoea).

A dose-response association was observed between higher alcohol consumption in 2006 and worse sleep quality in 2012, after adjusting for age, sex, socio-economic status, smoking status, physical activity, obesity, plasma lipid profiles, diabetes and hypertension. A similar association was observed when alcohol consumption in 2012 was used as exposure. Alcohol was associated with higher odds of having short sleep duration (adjusted OR for heavy- v. non-drinkers = 1·31; 95 % CI: 1·09, 1·57) and snoring (adjusted OR for heavy- v. non-drinkers: 1·38; 95 % CI: 1·22, 1·57). Consumption of hard liquor, but not beer or wine, was significantly associated with poor sleep quality.

Higher alcohol consumption was associated with poorer sleep quality and higher odds of having snoring and short sleep duration, the study concludes.

Source: Zheng D, Yuan X, Ma C, Liu Y, VanEvery H, Sun Y, Wu S, Gao X. Alcohol consumption and sleep quality: a community-based study. Public Health Nutr. 2021 Oct;24(15):4851-4858. doi.org/10.1017/S1368980020004553. Epub 2020 Nov 13. PMID: 33183388.

Alcohol's Impact on the cardiovascular system

In an open access narrative review published in the journal Nutrients, the epidemiological evidence is examined for the associations between alcohol consumption, including average alcohol consumption, drinking patterns, and alcohol use disorders, and CVDs, including ischaemic heart disease (IHD), stroke, hypertension, atrial fibrillation, cardiomyopathy, and heart failure. Methodological shortcomings, such as exposure classification and measurement, reference groups, and confounding variables (measured or unmeasured) are discussed.

The authors state that epidemiological studies indicate a complex relationship between various dimensions of alcohol consumption (i.e., life course drinking patterns) and CVD outcomes. Indeed, substantial heterogeneity is evident. Most epidemiological studies to date have relied on a single measurement of alcohol intake at baseline. It is assumed that the self-reported drinking levels, preferably including drinking patterns, remains the same before and after the baseline measurement. For many people this is clearly not the case, and even lifetime abstainers are hard to identify.

Does some alcohol consumption protect some people against ischaemic diseases to some degree? Epidemiological data, as outlined in the review, suggest that this is the case. For example, a J-shaped relationship emerges for average alcohol consumption and IHD and IS (ischaemic stroke). On the other hand, the relationship with incident hypertension, which is a potent risk factor for most if not all CVDs, is quite different between men and women, with an increased risk for any amount of alcohol consumption in men. While potential sources of bias, such as the reference group, i.e., separating lifetime abstainers, former drinkers, and heavy episodic drinkers, have been systematically investigated for the relationship between alcohol and IHD, their impact on other CVD outcomes remains less clear.

The review authors state that while there is a lack of large-scale randomised studies on the long-term effect of alcohol consumption on various CVD endpoints, short-term clinical trial data indicate a sizable effect of alcohol consumption on HDL-C and fibrinogen. However, the heterogeneity found in epidemiological studies points to more than just biological differences. Socio economic status, for example, might influence the impact of alcohol on CVD. More research is necessary to advance knowledge on this topic.

Source: Roerecke M. Alcohol's Impact on the Cardiovascular System. Nutrients. 2021; 13(10):3419. doi.org/10.3390/nu13103419

Association between alcohol and bone mineral density

Many previous studies have reported a positive relationship between alcohol and bone mineral density (BMD). However, the causality between alcohol and BMD has not been fully evaluated.

A study enrolled 8,892 participants from the Dong-gu study. Mendelian randomization (MR) using two-stage least-squared regression was used to evaluate the association between the genetically predicted amount of alcohol consumption per day and BMD. The aldehyde dehydrogenase 2 (ALDH2) rs671 polymorphism was used as instrumental variables for alcohol consumption. Age, smoking history, and BMI were adjusted in the multivariate model.

Self-reported alcohol consumption was positively related to total hip and lumbar spine BMD in both sexes. In multivariate Mendelian randomization analysis, the genetically predicted amount of alcohol consumption was positively associated with both total hip and lumbar spine BMD in men. Total hip BMD and lumbar spine BMD increased by 0.004 g/cm2 (95% confidence interval [CI] 0.002-0.007) and 0.007 g/cm2 (95% CI 0.004-0.011) with doubling of alcohol consumption. However, in women, genetically predicted alcohol consumption was not significantly associated with BMD.

In this MR study, genetically predicted alcohol consumption was positively associated with BMD in men. The study authors state that this result suggests that the association between alcohol consumption and BMD is causal.

Source: Choi CK, Kweon SS, Lee YH, Nam HS, Park KS, Ryu SY, Choi SW, Shin MH. Association between alcohol and bone mineral density in a Mendelian randomization study: the Dong-gu study. J Bone Miner Metab. 2021 Oct 9. doi.org/10.1007/s00774-021-01275-6.

Smoking, alcohol and coffee consumption and pregnancy loss

A mendelian randomization study was conducted to determine the associations of smoking and alcohol and coffee consumption with pregnancy loss.

Data was based on a total of 60,565 cases with pregnancy loss and 130,687 non cases from UK Biobank study and 3,312 cases with pregnancy loss and 64,578 non cases from FinnGen consortium.

The study found that genetic predisposition to smoking initiation was associated with an increased risk of pregnancy loss in both UK Biobank and FinnGen. The combined odds ratio (OR) was 1.31 (95% confidence interval [CI], 1.25-1.37) for one standard deviation increase in the prevalence of smoking initiation. There were no significant associations of genetically predicted consumption of alcohol (OR, 1.09; 95% CI, 0.93-1.27) or coffee (OR, 0.96; 95% CI, 0.87-1.06) with pregnancy loss.

This study on the basis of genetic data suggests the causal potential of the association of smoking but not moderate alcohol and coffee consumption with pregnancy.

Source: Yuan S, Liu J, Larsson SC. Smoking, alcohol and coffee consumption and pregnancy loss: a Mendelian randomization investigation. Fertil Steril. 2021Oct;116(4):1061-1067. doi.org/10.1016/j.fertnstert.2021.05.103.

How has COVID-19, lockdown and social distancing changed alcohol drinking patterns?

A study investigated how measures adopted by nations to prevent COVID 19 infection (such as social distancing and quarantine) affected people's relationship with alcohol consumption in cultures where alcohol plays an important social role.

A questionnaire-based study, designed to follow the drinking behaviour of people before and during lockdown was applied to two different cultural groups impacted by the pandemic during the strict phase of lockdown, Great Britain and Spain.

Overall, Spanish participants consumed alcoholic beverages less frequently during lockdown than before, while British participants reported no change in their consumption habits. Spaniards' decrease in alcohol consumption is related to the absence of a social contexts while Britons seems to have adapted their consumption to the modified context. Results suggest that, alcohol consumption is a central core of the British culture, while for the Spanish, socialization is more a cultural characteristic than the alcohol itself.

Source: Rodrigues H, Valentin D, Franco-Luesma E, Ramaroson Rakotosamimanana V, Gomez-Corona C, Saldaña E, Sáenz-Navajas MP. How has COVID-19, lockdown and social distancing changed alcohol drinking patterns? A cross-cultural perspective between Britons and Spaniards. Food Qual Prefer. 2022 Jan;95:104344. doi.org/10.1016/j.foodqual.2021.104344.

#Alcohol: portrayals of alcohol in top videos on TikTok

A study characterised the content and themes present in user-generated TikTok videos portraying alcohol. The 100 most popular videos including the #alcohol hashtag on the popular social networking site TikTok were identified.

The research found that the videos in the sample were collectively viewed 291,999,100 times. The 98% of videos expressed pro-alcohol sentiment. 41% were guide videos demonstrating drink recipes. 72% included liquor. Consuming multiple drinks quickly was depicted in 61% of videos, whereas intoxication was exhibited less frequently (13%). Positive associations with alcohol were prevalent; 69% of videos conveyed positive experiences with alcohol, 55% of videos contained humour, and 45% included associations of alcohol with camaraderie. Negative associations with alcohol were rarely portrayed (4%).

The researchers conclude that top alcohol-related videos on TikTok are heavily viewed. Their contents demonstrate a propensity to promote rapid consumption of multiple drinks and to juxtapose alcohol use with positive associations such as humour and camaraderie, while rarely depicting negative outcomes associated with hazardous alcohol use.

Source: Russell AM; Davis RE; Ortega JM; Colditz JB; Primack B; Barry AE, "#Alcohol: portrayals of alcohol in top videos on TikTok", Journal of Studies on Alcohol and Drugs, Vol 82, No 5, 2021, pp615-622. doi.org/10.15288/jsad.2021.82.615

Colour-coded nutrition labels and warnings linked to more healthful purchases

Some countries have introduced mandatory front-of-package labelling in hope of improving people's diets and reducing the burden of diseases associated with poor diets. These labels may employ colour coding to indicate nutrition, or they may warn consumers about unhealthy features of products. However, studies on the impact of such labelling have produced mixed evidence.

To help clarify the impact of front-of-package nutrition labels, Song and colleagues analysed data from 134 peer-reviewed studies published between January 1990 and May 2021. They conducted a meta-analysis in order to integrate the results of the studies and evaluate the impact of four different labelling systems -two that used colour-coding and two that used warnings.

This meta-analysis showed that all four labelling systems appeared to be advantageous in encouraging consumers to purchase more nutritionally beneficial products. Evaluation of specific nutritional qualities found that labelling nudged consumers towards foods and drinks with lower levels of energy, sodium, fat, and saturated fat.

The analysis also highlighted psychological mechanisms that may underlie the different strengths of different labels, due to their impact on consumers' understanding of nutrition information and resulting changes in attitudes towards unhealthy or healthy foods. Colour-coded labels appeared to be more beneficial in promoting more healthful purchases, and warning labels were more effective in discouraging unhealthy purchases.

These findings could help guide and refine policies on front-of-package labelling to improve public health. Meanwhile, future research could build on this study by addressing related concepts, such as the impact of labelling on reformulation of products by the food industry or more long-term benefits of labelling on purchasing behaviour.

Source: Jing Song, Mhairi K. Brown, Monique Tan, Graham A. MacGregor, Jacqui Webster, Norm R. C. Campbell, Kathy Trieu, Cliona Ni Mhurchu, Laura K. Cobb, Feng J. He. Impact of color-coded and warning nutrition labelling schemes: A systematic review and network meta-analysis. PLOS Medicine, 2021; 18 (10): e1003765 doi.org/10.1371/journal.pmed.1003765.

Challenge to finding that alcohol industry funded health organizations misrepresent the evidence on cardiovascular effects of moderate alcohol consumption

A study by Lewis Peake, Mark Pettigrew and colleagues published in the European Journal of Public Health concluded that alcohol Industry-funded health organizations misrepresent the evidence on cardiovascular effects of moderate alcohol consumption and that therefore, tighter regulation of messaging that AI/SAPRO's provide to the public is required, to avoid the dissemination of harmful misinformation.

In response Hubert Sacy of Educ'alcool has challlenged the findings and provided evidence to illustrate that the authors of the study failed to include the most relevant webpages and publications in their anlysis. Sacy suggests that the authors either voluntarily chose to misrepresent their results, or they failed to adequately follow through with their methodology. Either way, He says that the authors publish an erratum correcting these mistakes.

Sacy argues that if the original study had included the most relevant webpages and publications, Educ'alcool's profile would more closely resemble data extracted from nonindustry- funded websites. More so, it also becomes evident that Educ'alcool provides the most complete information, compared to all organizations analyzed (industry and non-industry funded), spanning the greatest number of diseases and remains true to itself by providing a healthy level of unbiased information, without demonizing nor trivializing alcohol.

Lastly, although the authors state that Educ'alcool is an alcohol industry-funded organization, it is actually funded by a levy taken by the State-owned Quebec monopoly on the sales of alcohol.

Source: Lewis Peake, May C I van Schalkwyk, Nason Maani, Mark Petticrew, Analysis of the accuracy and completeness of cardiovascular health information on alcohol industry-funded websites, European Journal of Public Health, 2021, ckab135, doi.org/10.1093/eurpub/ckab135

Trends in alcohol consumption among adolescents in Europe: do changes occur in concert?

a Norwegian sociologist, Ole-Jørgen Skog, argued that there is a strong collective component to population drinking so that when the mean consumption changes drinkers across the entire distribution will move in concert.

A paper published in the journal Drug and Alcohol Dependence extends the scope of testing Skog's theory on the 'collectivity of drinking culture' to adolescent alcohol use in 26 European countries.

The research aimed to examine whether changes in adolescent alcohol use are consistent across different consumption levels, and explore whether trends in heavy and light drinkers diverged or converged.

Data came from six waves of the cross-sectional European School Survey Project on Alcohol and other Drugs (ESPAD) between 1999 and 2019. The sample consisted of n = 452,935 students aged 15-16 years. Trends in alcohol volume across consumption levels including abstainers were estimated by quantile regression models (50th, 80th, 90th and 95th percentile). Countries were classified according to trends showing (soft/hard) collectivity or (soft/hard) polarisation. Trends in heavy drinkers were compared with the population trend.

The study found that trends in alcohol consumption at different levels across 26 European countries in the period 1999-2019 were not homogeneous. Collective changes were found in 15 (14 soft/1 hard), and polarised trends in 11 countries (5 soft/6 hard). Collectivity was generally associated with a declining trend. In 18 countries, trends in heavy and light drinkers diverged.

Accepting some variation in the strength of changes across consumption levels, changes in many European countries occurred in the same direction. Yet, diverging trends at different consumption levels in most countries indicate a less beneficial change in heavy compared with light drinkers, implying that in addition to universal population-level strategies, intervention strategies targeting specific risk groups are needed to prevent alcohol-related harm.

Source: Loy JK; Seitz NN; Bye EK; Raitasalo K; Soellner R; Torronen J; Kraus L, "Trends in alcohol consumption among adolescents in Europe: do changes occur in concert?", Drug and Alcohol Dependence, Vol 228, 2021, Art No 109020, 11pp. doi.org/10.1016/j.drugalcdep.2021.109020

Seasonal and regional influences on alcohol consumption

Researchers in California examined the probability of detecting alcohol via urine drug testing as influenced by age, gender, seasonality, geography, COVID-19, and time in those seeking health care.

A cross-sectional study of urine drug testing results from January 1, 2013, to December 31, 2020, was conducted using adult patient specimens submitted for testing by health care professionals as part of routine care.

Alcohol positivity rate shows strong seasonal changes with an oscillating profile that peaks in the summer and is at a low point in winter. The highest predicted positivity rate for alcohol was in male patients, 45-64 years of age, and from a primary care setting. Alcohol positivity peaked in 2016 and declined the following year. While remaining relatively steady since 2017, a small but significant increase was noted after the COVID-19 emergency declaration on March 13, 2020. The probability of being alcohol-positive varies significantly by geographic region, and not all regions are changing at the same rate.

The researchers conclude that alcohol positivity in urine drug testing in patients seeking health care is influenced by multiple factors and has increased during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Source: Kelly L. Olson, Penn Whitley, Javier Velasco, Leah LaRue, Eric Dawson, Angela Huskey, Seasonal and Regional Influences on Alcohol Consumption: An Analysis of Near-Real-Time Urine Drug Test Results in Those Seeking Health Care, Drug and Alcohol Dependence, Volume 227, 2021, 108908, ISSN 0376-8716. doi.org/10.1016/j.drugalcdep.2021.108908.

Mental Health of children and young adults in England, 2021

A report published by NHS digital looks at the mental health of children and young people in England in 2021. The findings draw on a sample of 3,667 children and young people aged between 6 and 23 years old, who were surveyed in 2017 and 2021.

The report asked older children and young adults whether they had used any substances including alcohol, tobacco or cannabis or other drugs in the previous seven days. In 2021, most 11 to 16-year-olds reported that they had not had alcohol (94.4%), cigarettes (98.4%), or cannabis or other drugs (99.2%) in the previous seven days. Rates were similar in boys and girls. There were no statistically significant differences between rates in 2020 and 2021 in this age group.

In 2021, most 17 to 22-year-olds reported that they had not had alcohol (56.7%), cigarettes (86.9%), or used cannabis or other drugs (91.7%) in the previous seven days. Rates were generally similar in young men and women.

Young people with a probable mental disorder were more likely to have smoked cigarettes (23.7%) or used cannabis or other drugs (16.5%) than those unlikely to have a mental disorder (9.3% and 5.2% respectively). There was no statistically significant difference in alcohol use by mental health of young person. While rates of cigarette and cannabis or other drug use were similar in 2020 and 2021, the proportion of young people who had consumed an alcoholic drink in the previous seven days fell from 55.5% in 2020 to 43.3% in 2021.

files.digital.nhs.uk/97/B09EF8/mhcyp_2021_rep.pdf

Dutch government advised to introduce sugar tax and increase cost of alcohol

An advisory report published by the Scientific Council for Government Policy (WRR) states that, in order to reduce national healthcare costs in the future, more must be done to improve the overall health of people in the Netherlands - for example, introduce a sugar tax and raise alcohol prices in order to encourage a healthier lifestyle.

According to the WRR report, the number of people working in the healthcare sector will double by 2060, with current trends showing that in 40 years' time, healthcare expenditure will amount to 16.000 euros per member of the population. In order to try and limit this growth and the rising cost of managing the Dutch healthcare system, the WRR recommends the introduction of preventative policies to encourage healthy living.

The WRR report encourages the introduction of a sugar tax, the reduction of salt content in foods, a cap for the number of shops with an alcohol permit, or the implementation of a minimum price for alcoholic beverages.

"There is still much to be gained, especially in the prevention of diseases: it costs little and it yields a lot," says Gijsbert Werner from the WRR. His colleague Marianne de Visser agrees that something must be done - and soon. "We are sounding the alarm," De Visser says, "politics must act now, the problems are already there."

The Dutch government has already taken steps in an attempt to encourage healthy drinking and reduce alcohol consumption, particularly amongst young people. As of July 1, 2021, the government introduced a cap for discounts on alcohol at supermarkets, bringing an end to the days of "buy one get one free."

Evaluation of the impact of alcohol minimum unit pricing (MUP) on crime and disorder, public safety and public nuisance

A briefing paper published by public Health Scotland on 12th October reports on the effect of Minimum Unit Price for alcohol (MUP) on crime and disorder, public safety, and public nuisance.

The analysis of crime data from Police Scotland and Greater Manchester Police indicates that MUP in Scotland had a limited impact on alcohol-related crime, disorder and public nuisance. This was also true for non-alcohol-related crimes that might have been unintended consequences of MUP, such as drug-related crime.

publichealthscotland.scot/media/9628/evaluation-of-the-impact-of-alcohol-minimum-unit-pricing-mup-on-crime-and-disorder-public-safety-and-public-nuisance-briefing-paper.pdf

Changes to how alcohol health trends are track in England as drinking rates fall, plus updates to Local Alcohol Profiles for England

The UK government has announced that it has implemented an update to its use of alcohol-attributable fractions (AAFs), which denote the proportion of disease cases estimated to have been caused by alcohol. The change impacts how alcohol-related mortality and hospital admissions in England are calculated. This change has been made as the result of persistent falls in the levels of drinking across the population as the latest evidence suggest that the majority of AAFs are smaller than previously thought.

PHE commented that "currently published rates are too high and if LAPE [Local Alcohol Profiles for England] were to continue producing statistics using the older AAFs then this inaccuracy would continue and indeed worsen over time."

PHE said updating its methodology to account for declining alcohol consumption across the population, as well as harmful drinking patterns such as binge drinking, would result in current estimates of alcohol-related deaths and admissions being lowered by around a quarter.

The changes will present a more accurate picture and will take into account more than a decade of reduced alcohol consumption and binge drinking while continuing to recognise any increase in alcohol-related admissions.

The updated methodology will be backdated to 2016, to allow for a more accurate long-term view of trends.

Implementing the new methodology in the latest Local Alcohol Profiles for England has meant that:

- Estimated alcohol-related deaths across England for 2018 have been lowered by around 5,700. This equates to around 23% of deaths previously estimated and lowered the death rate per 100,000 for 2018 from 46.5 to 35.8.
- Estimated hospital admissions for alcohol-related conditions (narrow) for 2018 have been lowered by around 83,000. This equates to around 23% of admissions previously estimated and lowered the rate per 100,000 for 2018 from 664 to 512.
- Estimated hospital admissions for alcohol-related conditions (broad) for 2018 have been lowered by around 320,000. This equates to around 25% of admissions previously estimated and lowered the rate per 100,000 for 2018 from 2,367 to 1,766.
- However, whilst the rates have been lowered, it is important to note that the direction of the trend in rates since 2016 for mortality and admissions remains unchanged, showing the relative stasis in mortality and increase in admissions evident before the revision.

New and revised alcohol-related mortality and hospital admissions data have been added to the Local Alcohol Profiles for England (LAPE) tool on the Fingertips platform.

There were 19,190 alcohol-related deaths in England in 2019, a minor reduction in the rate to 35.7 (per 100,000). The rate shows no significant change since 2016.

There were 976,425 alcohol-related hospital admissions under the Broad definition in England in 2019 to 2020, an increase in the rate to 1,815 (per 100,000). This represents the third consecutive increase in the rate since 2016 to 2017.

There were 280,185 alcohol-related hospital admissions under the Narrow definition in England in 2019 to 2020, an increase in the rate to 519 (per 100,000). This represents the second consecutive increase in the rate since 2017 to 2018.

Except for admissions in the under 40s (Narrow) and all age admissions for self-poisoning by and exposure to alcohol (Narrow) and mental and behavioural disorders due to use of alcohol (Narrow) all admission indicators show an increase for the latest time point (2019 to 2020).

Gender and inequality gaps persist across the measures showing that greater levels of harm are seen in men and the most deprived (with the noted exception that the female admission rate is higher for self-poisoning (Narrow)).

gov.uk/government/statistics/local-alcohol-profiles-for-england-lape-october-2021-update/local-alcohol-profiles-for-england-short-statistical-commentary-october-2021

Office for Health Improvement and Disparities launches in UK

The Office for Health Improvement and Disparities launched in October, with Chief Medical Officer, Professor Chris Whitty to provide professional leadership to OHID. The new body will tackle health disparities across the UK through a new approach to public health focused on stopping debilitating health conditions before they develop.

OHID marks a distinct shift in focus at the heart of government in addressing the unacceptable health disparities that exist across the country to help people live longer, healthier lives and reduce the pressure on the health and care system as work is done to reduce the backlog and put social care on a long-term sustainable footing.

The latest figures show clear trends, based on geographical location, of a person's life expectancy and the years they can expect to live a healthy life. For example:

- men in the most deprived areas in England are expected to live nearly 10 years fewer than those in the least deprived. Women in the same areas can expect to live 7 years fewer
- smoking is more prevalent in more deprived areas and one of the leading causes of inequalities in life expectancy; an international study found it accounts for half the difference in mortality between the least and most deprived men aged 35 to 69
- obesity is widespread but more prevalent among the most deprived areas; prevalence is almost 8% higher among those living in the most deprived decile of local authorities (66.6%) compared to those in the least deprived areas (58.8%)

OHID has been set up to change this – it will co-ordinate an ambitious programme across central and local government, the NHS and wider society, drawing on expert advice, analysis and evidence, to drive improvements in the public's health. Preventing illness before it develops will help to reduce the pressure on services, saving significant money and resource, and ensuring our record investment in the health and social care system goes as far as possible.

Health and Social Care Secretary, Sajid Javid said: The Office for Health Improvement and Disparities will be the driving force across government, supported by communities, academics, industry and employers, to level up the health of our nation, which will reduce the pressure on our NHS and care services.

Chief Medical Officer, Professor Chris Whitty said: OHID will work collaboratively across the national, regional and local levels as well as with the NHS, academia, the third sector, scientists, researchers and industry. The biggest preventable killers, such as tobacco, obesity, alcohol and recreational drugs, cost the taxpayer billions of pounds each year to fund treatment and long-term care, as well as putting bed capacity pressure on the health service. To change course on these preventable issues, OHID will work with the rest of government, the NHS, local government and the wider public health system and industry to improve detection and prevention for people at risk of ill health, as well as applying cutting edge.

gov.uk/government/news/new-era-of-public-health-to-tackle-inequalities-and-level-up-the-uk

Changes to Northern Ireland liquor licensing laws come into effect

Pubs and nightclubs in Northern Ireland will be able to stay open longer after changes to liquor licensing laws came into effect on Oct 1.

The changes mean pubs and clubs can apply to serve alcohol for an extra hour, until 02:00. Drinking-up time will also be extended to one hour, meaning pubs and clubs can stay open to 03:00. Easter drinking restrictions have also been removed in the first changes to NI licensing laws in 25 years. Restrictions on late opening on Sundays have also been removed.

Micro breweries and gin distilleries must wait for the introduction of secondary legislation on 1 April 2022 before they can apply for licences to sell their own produce in tap rooms, off sales and online, according to the Department for Communities.

Alcohol licences for cinemas will also be available from 1 April 2022, bringing them into the same category as theatres, ballrooms and race tracks.

Drinkaware Monitor report for 2021

Building on findings from the 2020 Drinkaware Monitor, Drinkaware's latest monitor report aims to further understand the impact of the pandemic on the UK's drinking—more than one year on from the onset of societal restrictions imposed due to the coronavirus pandemic. Drinkaware wanted to understand whether drinking habits were returning to pre-pandemic levels or whether worrying trends identified throughout 2020 had continued despite the easing of restrictions.

The annual survey, conducted for Drinkaware by YouGov asked 9,137 UK adults a series of questions about their alcohol use. Their research found that 30% of high-risk UK drinkers were drinking more in May than before the pandemic, 17% of UK adults who drink (the equivalent of 7.5 million) were classified as high-risk using a three-question screening tool devised by the World Health Organisation; those who are high-risk consume more units in a typical day and tend to drink regularly. Their physical and mental health is at serious risk from drinking.

The report found that the polarisation between high risk and low risk drinkers observed throughout 2020 continues.

Whilst the number of low-risk drinkers and adults who don't drink is increasing, the level of high-risk drinkers remains largely unchanged. The pandemic created or increased certain drinking behaviours, such as drinking alone at home or in public places, and there are indications that these situations were deemed more socially acceptable during the pandemic. High risk drinkers are the most likely to report drinking more, more often and in different situations than usual compared to before the pandemic.

36% of high risk drinkers report that they intend to cut down on drinking when pandemic restrictions ease, although 42% indicated the same in 2020.

Drinkers reported that the pandemic, and particularly times of increased restrictions/ lockdowns, caused periods of high stress, anxiety, isolation, and boredom, and that some turned to alcohol as a coping mechanism.

While parents with children aged 18 and under at home were more likely to report drinking more than they usually would have during the first lockdown (March-June 2020), drinking levels in the last 30 days (May/June 2021) has dropped and is similar to those without children at home.

Adults in the most deprived areas are more likely to not drink alcohol and were more likely to report drinking less during the first lockdown (March-June 2020) than their usual amounts. Yet, drinkers in most deprived areas are more likely to be classified as high-risk drinkers (based on the full AUDIT screening tool) than those in the least deprived areas.

drinkaware.co.uk/media/c5fjnwjo/drinkaware-monitor-2021-research-report-final.pdf

Supermarkets to trial AI technology to prevent underage alcohol sales

Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology will be trialled by UK supermarkets to tackle underage alcohol sales from October as part of a Home Office initiative.

The AI technology has been developed by digital identity verification company Yoti, and has already been deployed by the Post Office, police, NHS, NSPCC and social media. The technology is able to estimate the ages of 16 and 17-year-olds within one year of accuracy, and those between the ages of 13-24 within a 1.5 year range, after analysing tens of thousands of images.

UK licensing laws have prevented the technology from being used so far, even though it has been integrated into the self-checkout systems of major supermarket. Checkouts will ask customers for permission to take a photograph of their face, before analysing it to make an approximation of their age, and deleting the image. The technology is not able to link a face to an identity.

Employment of the technology would remove the need for ID checks and save time whilst ensuring that underage customers are unable to purchase alcohol.

Reform of alcohol licensing law in Ireland

In Ireland, major changes to alcohol licensing laws have been discussed by the Cabinet, including making it easier for cultural venues such as theatres, galleries and exhibition spaces to get licences. Staggered and extended closing times for bars and possibly nightclubs as well as bringing Sunday trading times into line with the rest of the week, have been considered.

On December 16, The Minister of State with responsibility for Civil and Criminal Justice, Hildegarde Naughton TD, received government approval to draft the General Scheme of the Sale of Alcohol Bill 2021 to reform and modernise licensing laws in Ireland.

This is a landmark moment in the reform of Ireland's licensing laws, some of which date as far back as 1833 and no longer reflect the dynamic and diverse society and economy that Ireland has become. Currently, there are many different types of alcohol licences available in Ireland and the variety of licences that a venue or premises selling alcohol can have is quite broad. It is intended to streamline and re-categorise the types of licences available to establishments to ensure a more open and coherent process while still ensuring that the sale of alcohol can continue to be controlled appropriately.

To meet the needs of new areas of activity in the hospitality sector, new categories of licences may also be required and this will be considered in the drafting of the Bill. Other issues to be considered include trading hours and ways to modernise and streamline the licensing application process.

Minister Naughton was also mindful of the potential harmful effects of alcohol consumption, noting: "In modernising this industry it will be crucial that public health needs and the needs of residents are considered. Reform will be developed with a supportive approach to businesses, and the interests of public health, consumers and communities will be central to its implementation.

"During the detailed consideration of these legislative proposals it will be important to obtain the views of these important groups and I intend to consult with relevant stakeholders."

This follows on from the commitment given by Minister Helen McEntee in the Justice Plan 2021 to reform the licensing laws on the same day.

Portman Group calls on WHO for renewed focus on harmful drinking and to recognise the industry as a constructive partner

On the 24th September, The Portman Group published its response to the latest draft World Health Organisation (WHO) action plan to implement the Global Strategy to Reduce the Harmful Use of Alcohol. The Portman Group express concern that the action plan is moving away from the stated aims of the strategy and calls on the WHO to commit to a renewed focus on harmful drinking and to recognise the industry as a constructive partner in tackling harm.

Alcohol could be allowed in football stadiums in England

Drinking alcohol in seats at football grounds 'could be permitted' as part of fan-led review into game.

While still permitted in the concourses, drinking alcohol in seats has been banned since 1985 to stem hooliganism in the game. Former sports minister Tracey Crouch is set to publish her independent fan-led review into the game, with potential changes to alcohol rules among the key suggestions. It is thought that Crouch will push for a pilot scheme to allow drinking alcohol in football stadium seats during matches. The proposed pilot would allow serving alcohol at clubs in the National League and League Two, with the aim of expanding it across the professional game if successful.

Tracey commented that a progressive revision of the match-going experience was still needed to help support clubs. She said: "At the moment there's a universal ban on the sale of alcohol during football matches in the National League and above". She suggested football needed to take responsibility and sustain itself better - and that the scheme could help protect clubs lower down the 'football pyramid'.

Research in Portugal explore how yeasts can reduce the alcohol level in wine

Research from the University of Trás-os-Montes e Alto Douro (UTAD) has explored strategies to reduce the concentration of alcohol in wines by manipulating the metabolism of yeast in order to mitigate one of the effects of global warming in the wine industry.

Researcher João Pedro Zamith explained that the aim was to "study yeasts that can mitigate ethanol in wine" because, as a result of climate change and global warming, "grapes have a tendency to have an increase of glucose in their composition… That is, in the fermentation phase for production, wines have tended, increasingly, to have a higher level of alcohol." The consequences of the increase in alcohol concentrations in wines range from damage to the sensory profile of wines, to public health concerns and higher taxation of wine products.

To tackle this "emerging problem", João Pedro Zamith studied "strategies that mitigate these effects by manipulating yeast metabolism", using "systems biology and metabolic engineering approaches… One of the ways to mitigate this increase in ethanol is, in the fermentation process, to implement a yeast that redirects, that instead of producing alcohol produces other compounds," he said, adding that the research revealed two yeast variants that are more promising for meeting winemaking needs.

The study, carried out via computer and using artificial intelligence and metabolic engineering methodologies, made it possible to "simulate the genetic and environmental conditions and analyse the impact of each strategy on the yeast's metabolism".

The results support the hypothesis that "the methods used may be a great advantage for the wine industry, not only making the process more efficient, but possibly giving the wine healthier properties and a more predictable sensory profile".

Zamith also argued that "systems and strategies based on synthetic biology, such as the one explored in this study, will have an impact not only on the wine industry, but also on the future of our society".

macaubusiness.com/portugal-university-researcher-studies-yeasts-to-reduce-alcohol-level-in-wine/

Alcohol consumption among young people falling, little gender difference in the Baltic States, Finland and Sweden

A study published in the BMJ examines monthly alcohol consumption among young people in the Baltic States, as well as in Finland and Sweden.

The researchers found that monthly alcohol use decreased significantly among boys and girls in all countries from 2003 to 2015. In 2015, the prevalence of monthly alcohol use among boys was 36.1% in Estonia, 44.3% in Latvia, 32.4% in Lithuania, 32.3% in Finland and 22.4% in Sweden. Among girls, it was 39.1%, 45.9%, 35.6%, 31.8% and 29.1%, respectively. In all countries, higher odds of monthly alcohol use were observed among adolescents who skipped school, smoked cigarettes, used cannabis, perceived alcohol to be easy to access and had parents who did not know always/often about their child's whereabouts on Saturday nights. Compared with Estonia, associations between alcohol use and explanatory factors were similar in Latvia and Lithuania but different in Finland and Sweden.

The authors suggest that the results of cross-national comparison of alcohol use and explanatory factors could be effectively used to further decrease alcohol use among adolescents.

Source: Kudre D, Vorobjov S, Ringmets I, Pärna K. Adolescent alcohol use in Estonia compared with Latvia, Lithuania, Finland and Sweden: results from cross-sectional surveys, 2003-2015. BMJ Open. 2021 Sep 15;11(9):e044889. doi.org/10.1136/bmjopen-2020-044889.

Young people in Norway drinking less often during the pandemic

In Norway, the number of young people aged 16-24 who say they drink alcohol weekly has declined in the last year. The elderly and adults, on the other hand, have drank more frequently.

The survey on tobacco and drug use in Norway (the drug survey) was carried out in collaboration with the National Institute of Public Health, and data were collected in the spring of 2021. During the past year, there have been periodic closures and restrictions on the opportunities for many people to socialise. In the big cities, it has sometimes been impossible to drink alcohol in restaurants and nightclubs due to strict corona rules.

There were no significant changes at the national level in terms of the proportion of the population who stated that they drank weekly within the last year – 34% last year against 35% this year. Men generally drink both slightly more often, and a little more than women do. 43% of men state that they have drunk weekly in the past year, compared with 27% of women. There are also slightly more men who have drunk weekly this year than last year, while it seems to be a slight decrease for women.

Among young people in the age group 16-24, there has been a decrease in the proportion who have drunk alcohol regularly in the last 12 months. This applies to both young men and young women. 18% of young men report drinking weekly in 2021, down from 27% in 2020. Among young women, the proportion has decreased from 24% in 2020 to 16% this year. Restrictions on the possibility of larger parties and gatherings have likely reduced the proportion of young people who have drunk alcohol once a week or more often. There is reason to believe that this has also affected the increase in young people who state that they have not drunk in the past year, from 15% in 2020 to 20% in 2021.

The proportion of people who drink at least six units of alcohol on the same occasion weekly has not changed significantly in the last year, although basic data show a slight increase for some adult age groups.

ssb.no/helse/helseforhold-og-levevaner/statistikk/royk-alkohol-og-andre-rusmidler/artikler/unge-har-drukket-sjeldnere-under-pandemien

Elaine Hindal to step down as Chief Executive of Drinkaware

Drinkaware's Chief Executive, Elaine Hindal, has announced that, after almost nine years in the role, she will be stepping down in the new year. Elaine will formally leave her position on 28th January 2022. The search for a new Drinkaware Chief Executive will begin shortly.

Commenting on Elaine Hindal's announcement Drinkaware's Chair, Sir Leigh Lewis, said "Elaine has been an inspirational Chief Executive who has guided Drinkaware from its very modest beginnings to the highly respected and influential organisation it is today. Never has that leadership been more in evidence than during the past 18 months since the advent of the Pandemic when she has steered the organisation through an inevitably challenging period to a new level of ambition and capability. The entire Board of Trustees joins me in thanking her for her enormous contribution to our work and wishing her every success for the future."

Drinkaware Ireland sees increasing demand for services

The demand for drinkaware.ie's services has reached record highs during the Covid-19 pandemic. According to the charity, 552,194 people visited its website last year - a 5% increase on 2019's total. 117,000 of these page visits related to Covid-19-specific digital content. The charity's Facebook received nearly 400% more page visits in 2020 than in 2019.

Demand for the free resources provided by Drinkaware.ie also rose, with 11,134 people placing an order for them in 2020 - a 156% increase on the number supplied in 2019. From January to December of last year, Drinkaware said it provided more than 96,000 information booklets, posters, calculator wheels, and measurement cups to Irish people who placed orders online.

Much of Drinkaware's content throughout the pandemic has focused on 'mindful drinking' and responsible alcohol consumption.

drinkaware.ie/news/

MEPs back 2030 EU road safety plans

The European Parliament has voted overwhelmingly to back a document setting out the institution's views on the EU road safety strategy for the next ten years.

The Parliament's report follows the publication of the European Commission's ten year road safety plan published back in June 2019, and an outline of planned legislative measures announced in the Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy published in December last year.

MEPs have endorsed the overall EU strategy, with the headline targets to cut serious injuries and deaths by 50% by 2030, along with the vision zero and 'safe system' approach.

The European Parliament road safety report argues that the current recommendation on Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) limits for drivers should be updated to reflect a zero-tolerance approach – and that the same should apply to drug driving rules. The document also points out that points out that harmonising the permitted blood alcohol levels in the EU for all categories of vehicle will facilitate comparisons under the key performance indicators relating to sobriety on the roads;

ETSC Policy Director Ellen Townsend said: "We have seen bold action on vehicle safety from the EU in the last couple of years. We want the European Commission to step up and deliver now on other measures like updated advice on speed and drink-driving limits and consider the need to tackle drug driving and distracted driving as well. Longer term projects such as a new road safety agency need urgency to have an impact any time before 2030."

europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/A-9-2021-0211_EN.html

Majority of UK workplaces still unsure about booking Xmas parties

Based on a recent UK consumer survey, Guest Experience Management expert HGEM found that only 21% of workplaces are planning a Xmas party, however it is a significant increase from last year, when that figure was only 4%.

55% of workplaces remain unsure and could be adopting a 'wait and see' approach due to any potential new restrictions. In terms of personal safety, 89% of consumers are comfortable with socialising this Xmas, which is a 17% increase on last year.

Within the group of consumers who are comfortable with socialising, there are varying levels of confidence. 49% of consumers are happy to go to any venue, as long as safety measures are in place and the prevalence, much the same as last year. 28% of respondents are not worried about Covid safety at all, an increase of 11% from last year. 11% of consumers still don't feel safe enough to take part in any social gatherings, though that figure was much higher last year, when more than a quarter (28%) expressed they wouldn't feel comfortable going to a Xmas party.

Confidence has also increased in relation to going out in larger groups, as 39% say they have no upper limit on group sizes from a safety perspective, whilst 17% prefer group sizes of up to 30 people and 28% of consumers would like to limit the party to 20 people. Almost a fifth of consumers, however, still prefer to keep numbers under 10.

Consumer confidence is recovering well, as HGEM's Covid Safety Tracker indicated an average score of 7.9 out of 10, the highest it's been since tracking began in October 2020, when the average score was only 7.07.

hgem.com/opinion/2021-consumer-christmas-behaviours

Blue cheese and beer combination dates back to the 18th century

Research published in the journal Current Biology suggests 2,700 years ago miners ate cheese and beer in the salt mines of the Alps.

Scientists made the discovery by analysing samples of human excrement found at the Hallstatt salt mine. Lead author Frank Maixner, a microbiologist at the Eurac Research Institute in Bolzano, Italy commented that he was surprised the worker communities appeared to have deliberately fermented food. The finding was the earliest evidence to date of cheese ripening in Europe, according to researchers and while alcohol consumption is well documented, the salt miners' feces contained the first molecular evidence of beer consumption on the continent at that time.

EU Code of Conduct for Responsible Business and Marketing– Sectoral commitment by spiritsEUROPE

The EU commission developed with the EU food and drinks sector the 'Code of Conduct for Responsible Business and Marketing Practices' as one of the first deliverables of the Farm to Fork Strategy. By signing the code, spiritsEUROPE voluntarily committed to undertake to tangibly improve and communicate on the sector's sustainability performance. spiritsEUROPE put forward two sectoral pledges:

1) The provision of digital consumer information by means of an E-Label Platform to inform consumers reliably, effectively and efficiently at the point of purchase about the product they may consider buying, thereby contributing to enabling sustainable dietary choices
2) Coordinate and support the putting in place and monitoring of Responsible Drinking Initiatives (RDIs) in each Member State of the European Union.

On 30th September a new e-label platform was launched. U-LABEL will enable consumers across Europe to access information about the wine and spirits products they purchase, in their own language via QR code technology. U-LABEL is an innovation made possible through a unique collaboration between Comite Europeen des Entreprise Vins (CEEV) and SpiritsEUROPE.

The platform allows any wine or spirit company, small or large, to give EU consumers relevant, standardised and detailed product information – such as list of ingredients, nutrition information, responsible drinking guidelines and information about sustainability.

For the first time ever in the food sector, the Common Agricultural Policy legal framework will authorise wines to communicate mandatory information through e-labels. "We decided to create U-LABEL to offer all wine and spirits companies an affordable turnkey solution to embark on this digital journey. We are proud to be able to deliver this innovative multilingual tool over two years before new labelling rules become a legal obligation for wine producers under the CAP reform," added Ignacio Sánchez Recarte, CEEV Secretary General.

With fifteen companies participating in the pilot phase, the standardized U-LABEL system will be thoroughly tested. This successful collaboration with companies from various countries and sizes allowed U-LABEL to stick as close as possible to the true needs of today's wine and spirits companies and consumers.

"The European spirits industry already committed to providing energy information on label and ingredient information online in its 2019 MoU on Consumer Information, and we are meeting the targets we set then", said Ulrich Adam, SpiritsEUROPE Director General, "Consumers want comprehensive information at their digital fingertips. This is what we are providing voluntary through U-LABEL. We call on the European Commission to follow suit and set standards for digital labelling across product types, not to substitute but to complement on-pack information with what consumers are looking for."

U-LABEL will be opened to all wine and spirits companies from 1st November 2021.

The Queen is advised to give up her evening cocktail

In the UK , doctors have reportedly advised the Queen Elizabeth to give up her favourite evening cocktail as she prepares for a busy upcoming season and her Platinum Jubilee celebrations next June. The Queen is said to enjoy a dry martini. She also prefers a sweet German wine with dinner, and is partial to a Dubonnet and Gin cocktail.

The news follows previous reports this month that the one of the tunnels from St James's Palace leads to Duke's bar inside Mayfair's Duke's Hotel.

US Teen Drinking & Driving

In the US the prevalence of teens driving under the influence has been decreasing and many states have adopted laws over the past few decades to cut down on teen drinking and driving, along with other dangerous driving behaviours. These reforms include zero-tolerance laws for drinking drivers under the age of 21, liability for those who serve alcohol to the underaged, graduated license programmes that scale up new drivers' rights and responsibilities as they get more driving experience, and limits on the number of passengers who can be in the vehicle with a teen driver. As a result, teen-related traffic fatalities are down nearly 75% from their peaks in the late 1970 and the percentage of students who report that they have ridden with a drinking driver was down 39.9% in 1991 to 16.7% in 2019, according to the CDC's Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS). The data for students who report drinking and driving themselves also dropped from 10% in 2013 to 5.4% in 2019.

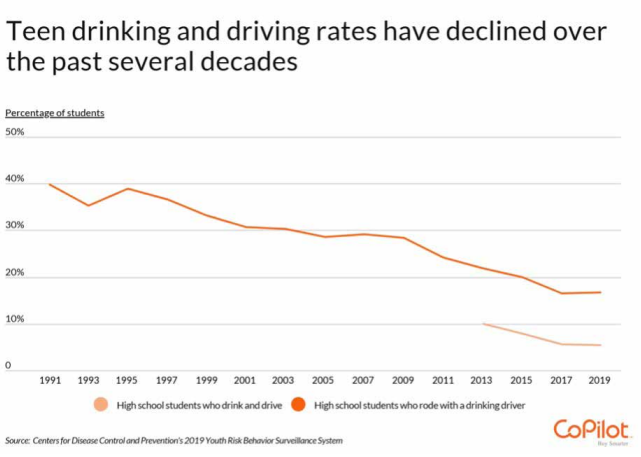
An article from Copilot in the states looks at drink driving amongst teens. It states that while progress has been made, teen drinking and driving persists. One of the challenges is that certain demographic groups among teens are more likely than others to engage in reckless behaviour like drinking and driving or riding with someone who has been drinking. For example, YRBSS data shows male high school students are nearly twice as likely as female students to report drinking and driving (7% vs. 3.6% of students), though female students are more likely to indicate that they have ridden with someone who drank and drove.

The likelihood that a student will drink and drive also increases with age. Only 3% of ninth graders—who are usually 14 or 15 years old, and therefore less likely to have received their driver's license or permit—report drinking and driving, compared to 7.8% of twelfth graders. In comparison, the percentage of high schoolers who have ridden with someone who drank and drove is fairly consistent across grades, between 16% and 17% for all ages.

In addition to demographic differences, the prevalence of drinking and driving varies by geography as well. There are a variety of reasons why this might be the case. While all states have a graduated license program in place, some are more permissive than others, allowing more drivers to get on the road at 14 or 15. Another reason could be variation in car dependence: in many rural states where the population is more spread out and fewer transportation alternatives are available, drivers log more miles on the road in general.

Researchers at CoPilot created a composite risk index using data. The index includes the percentage of high school students in each state who report drinking alcohol, binge drinking, riding with a drinking driver, or drinking and driving themselves. States were ordered based on their composite risk index, and only states with available data across all metrics were included in the analysis.

copilotsearch.com/posts/states-with-the-worst-teen-drinking-and-driving-problem/



Rank	State	Drinking and driving risk index	High school students who drink and drive	High school students who rode with a drinking driver	High school students who drink alcohol	High school students who are binge drinkers
1	Montana	92.85	7.1%	19.1%	33.4%	17.5%
2	Kansas	85.22	7.7%	16.4%	32.8%	18.8%
3	Louisiana	83.82	9.6%	24.5%	29.5%	10.7%
4	New Mexico	81.42	6.8%	20.7%	28.6%	12.1%
5	Vermont	80.48	6.2%	17.2%	30.9%	15.2%
6	Arkansas	71.43	6.7%	19.5%	25.4%	12.2%
7	Arizona	68.58	5.4%	18.4%	26.6%	14.7%

Trend of increased alcohol consumption during the pandemic in the US

Results from the second wave of a study conducted in the US by RTI International show that increases in alcohol consumption observed at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, including excessive consumption, were sustained through to at least November 2020.

Compared with February 2020, alcohol consumption in November 2020 was 39% higher in terms of drinks per month. The first wave of the survey examined changes between February and April 2020 and revealed an increase of 36% in that timeframe.

The proportion of people exceeding drinking guidelines increased 27% between February and April 2020, per the first wave of the survey, and that increase jumped to 39% between February and November 2020, according to the follow-up survey. Binge drinking saw an increase of 26% between February and April 2020, with a further increase to 30% between February and November 2020.

Carolina Barbosa, a health economist at RTI commented, "Our study shows that people didn't just increase their alcohol consumption for a month or two at the beginning of the pandemic — the trend held for nearly the entire year,""Increases in alcohol consumption have been associated with natural disasters and other large-scale events that induce stress and anxiety, and a pandemic certainly fits that description."

The new results show the largest increases in consumption between February and November 2020 were among Black and Hispanic women (173% and 148% increases, respectively), Black men (173%), men who selected something other than White, Black or Hispanic for their race/ethnicity (209%), and women with children under age 5 in the household (323%).

More women reported exceeding recommended drinking guidelines than men between April and November 2020, aligning with the first wave of survey data that showed the pandemic disproportionately affected women's drinking habits.

"Women are more likely to use alcohol to cope with stress, depression, and anxiety, and all these are a natural response to the COVID-19 pandemic," said Barbosa. "Alcohol consumption among women has been on the uptick for past two decades, and our study suggests the pandemic may only exacerbate that trend."

Compared with February 2020, the proportion of Black people drinking above recommended guidelines — that is, no more than four drinks per day and 14 drinks per week for men and no more than three drinks per day and seven drinks per week for women and people over age 65 — increased by 140% by April and was six times higher in November.

Additionally, there was an increase in proportion of respondents with mental health issues who reported drinking to cope with stress or tension, which increased from 5% in February to 15% in November. Average consumption among this set of respondents also increased by almost half a drink per day.

"Policymakers should be prepared to respond to the public health consequences of such a sudden, sustained increase in alcohol consumption," added Barbosa. "I would also encourage them to consider lessons learned from the pandemic. For example, relaxing regulations during the pandemic to allow curbside pick-up and extending privileges for home alcohol deliveries may have contributed to increased consumption, and now some of these relaxed regulations are being permanently adopted."

The follow-up survey was sponsored by the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) and re-surveyed respondents who participated in the first wave. The respondents were from a nationally representative sample.

Source: Barbosa, Carolina, Cowell, Alexander, Dowd, William. Alcohol Consumption in Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic in the United States Journal of addiction medicine. doi.org/10.1097/ADM.0000000000000767

Collaboration to discourage alcohol consumption for minors and drivers in Spain

In Spain an agreement has been signed between the General Directorate of Traffic and the Alcohol and Society Foundation. Director of the DGT, Pere Navarro, and the Director of Institutional Relations of the Alcohol and Society Foundation, Silvia Jato, commited the two institutions to develop, disseminate and implement the projects, actions and initiatives necessary for the prevention of alcohol consumption in young people, focusing on the incompatibility of alcohol and driving.

The General Directorate of Traffic will spread the message of the "Minors nor a drop" campaign, in the test centers and through its social networks, as well as at driver training centers. Similarly, the DGT will collaborate with its provincial network of road safety education coordinators, in specific workshops in order to raise awareness about the consequences of premature consumption of alcoholic beverages, demystifying many of the false beliefs that minors have about alcohol. The Alcohol and Society Foundation will train the DGT network of coordinators in the prevention of alcohol consumption in minors, and encourage specific workshops on this matter.

After signing the agreement, the director of the DGT, Pere Navarro, pointed out that "both entities pursue the same common objective of improving road safety and reducing accidents through education in the prevention of alcoholic beverages." Silvia Jato, director of Institutional Relations at FAS, stressed that "preventing the consumption of all types of alcoholic beverages among minors and other risk groups, such as drivers, is a priority for the Alcohol and Society Foundation. We appreciate being able to count on the collaboration of the General Directorate of Traffic to spread this message and thus raise awareness among future drivers and minors". "Thanks to this collaboration we can provide, not only minors, but also those who are being trained as drivers, with information and knowledge that will help them break many of the myths associated with alcohol consumption, offering them more resources and tools to that they can consider their consumption."

Conflict between alcohol to go and open container law in the US

The Center for Alcohol Policy published a report in August that highlights the implications of new alcohol to go legislation and open container laws in the US. The report argues that Open container laws that prohibit open alcohol containers in the vehicle while driving have served as an important countermeasure to stop drunk driving. Combined with enforcement of open container laws, they can reduce drunk driving by 17.6%. Currently 40 states, Washington, D.C., and three territories have laws prohibiting open containers that meet federal standards.

Across the country, 32 states relaxed alcohol regulations and allowed bars and restaurants to sell alcohol-to-go during Covid-19. As the pandemic's effects began to lift, some states have continued to allow or make permanent these changes to current alcohol sale laws. Others have discontinued these sales and temporary privileges.

Authors JT Griffin states that "Open container laws have a strong element of common sense. If the public should not drink and drive, it makes sense that they should not have open containers of alcohol in the vehicle. However, alcohol to go laws may mix this messaging. Laws may provide that to-go cocktails, wine, or beer may need to be covered, but are the covers/lids easily removed and does this send the wrong message to drivers? Federal open container law prohibits open containers in the passenger area and cabin of the vehicle. But do alcohol-to-go laws comply with federal open container policy? An argument could certainly be made that the intent of open container laws is that alcohol should be in its original, manufacturer's packaging. This is difficult if not impossible to achieve when serving a craft cocktail, draft beer, or glass of wine"

He concludes that "As states consider alcohol-to-go laws, they must consider the impact of these changes to public health and safety".

centerforalcoholpolicy.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/JT-Griffin_Open-Container-Laws_2021.pdf

360training acquires TIPS and expands its National alcohol safety training coverage

In the US, 360training has become the leading national alcohol safety training provider by offering instruction in all 50 states through the acquisition of several brands owned by Health Communications, Inc., including TIPS, GetTIPS, eTIPS, CAST, Compliance Solutions, and ASSET.

By combining their resources, 360training and TIPS will be able to enhance public safety by preventing alcohol-related incidents in communities across the United States.

TIPS (Training for Intervention ProcedureS) was founded 41 years ago, in 1979, by Dr Morris Chafetz, founding director of the National Institute on Alcoholism and Alcohol Abuse. His goal in creating the first TIPS programme was to constitute a curriculum that would give alcohol servers the skills and confidence required to protect their customers from becoming overly intoxicated.

Host responsibility guide in New Zealand

In New Zealand, the Health Promotion Agency has developed a new booklet for bars, taverns, restaurants, cafes and clubs. It provides guidance on strategies and tools to assist staff in licensed premises meet host responsibility requirements under the Sale and Supply of Alcohol Act 2012. A sample host responsibility policy is included.

alcohol.org.nz/sites/default/files/field/file_attachment/2.2%20AL452_Host_responsibility_Guidelines_Oct%202020.pdf

Queensland Police deploy devices with face biometrics to stop drunk drivers

Queensland Police have started using new alcohol interlock devices with biometric facial verification capabilities in order to lower rates of high-risk drink driving.

Convicted motorists will be forced to pay AU$2,000 (roughly US$1,450) for the installation of the biometric devices in their cars. After integration by an auto technician scheduled by the end of the month, the alcohol interlock devices will require a breath test, as well as a facial verification check to start the ignition.

According to Queensland Assistant Minister for Regional Roads Bruce Saunders, the new face biometrics technology was introduced to identify drivers trying to get around previous technology.

The move comes as the government agreed a reduction of the high-risk Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC)level in Queensland from 0.15 to 0.1 state-wide.

Australian cars could soon be fitted with technology that 'sniffs' out alcohol

Victorian trucks and cars will be among the first to roll out new technology which uses an advanced sensor to 'sniff' alcohol in the air taking less than one second to detect whether a driver is over the drink drive limit. The sensors can pick up blood alcohol levels before the car is even started.

The passive alcohol sensor draws in the driver's exhaled breath, with infrared light beams measuring the amount of carbon dioxide and alcohol molecules. If more than the permitted concentration is detected, the car will not move.

Developers say the technology is more precise than existing interlocks and breathalysers and can even distinguish between a driver and a passenger.

Victoria is the only jurisdiction outside the US to trial the technology. Some of Australia's biggest tech and transport companies are ready to roll it out in fleets and heavy vehicles as soon as it's given the green light.

Australia - causes of death 2020

The Australia Bureau of Statistics has published provisional mortality counts for deaths during the pandemic period. These data provide an early indicator of changes in patterns of mortality and the report provides snapshots for selected causes of death for 2020 for both doctor and coroner certified deaths.

Key findings include

- COVID-19 was the 38th leading cause of death (898 deaths).
- In 2020 there was a decrease in mortality in Australia.
- The five leading causes decreased, with a significant reduction in respiratory diseases.
- Rates from suicide, drug overdoses and car crashes decreased.
- Alcohol-induced death rates increased by 8.3%.

Alcohol-induced deaths are those where the underlying cause can be directly attributed to alcohol use, including acute conditions such as alcohol poisoning or chronic conditions such as alcoholic liver cirrhosis.

There were 1,452 people who died of an alcohol-induced death (1,056 males and 396 females).

- There was an 8.3% increase in the age-standardised rate of alcohol-induced deaths, with 108 additional deaths since 2019.
- For females, the rate is equal to the highest in the ten year time series at 2.8 deaths per 100,000 people (12.0% increase).
- While there was a 6.9% increase in the rate for males, it is not the highest rate increase or rate in the ten year times series.
- The rate increase is largely due to conditions associated with long term alcohol use including liver cirrhosis.

abs.gov.au/statistics/health/causes-death/causes-death-australia/2020

'Always respect, always DrinkWise' campaign

On the eve of the NRL Finals series, Penrith Panthers star Matt Burton and Sydney Roosters NRLW captain Corban Baxter joined forces with DrinkWise, the NSW Police and local Liquor Accords Hastings, Nambucca and Macleay Valleys to launch Always respect, always DrinkWise. This campaign is aimed at reminding the community about the importance of moderating their alcohol consumption and always being respectful towards others.

As part of the awareness campaign, Burton and Baxter have recorded messages to NRL fans.

DrinkWise CEO Simon Strahan added: "DrinkWise is pleased to launch the Always respect, always DrinkWise campaign in partnership with NSW Police, the NRL and regional NSW Liquor Accords," Strahan said.

"With the NRL finals series now upon us, this campaign is an important reminder to enjoy the series, but always respect each other and, if consuming alcohol, always do so in moderation and responsibly."

The new Always respect, always DrinkWise messaging will be promoted throughout the NRL Finals series across the NSW Police, NRL and DrinkWise social and digital channels and supported by awareness messages from Burton and Baxter, while Hastings, Nambucca and Macleay Valley Liquor Accord members will display the messaging at their licensed pubs and venues across regional NSW.

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 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 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.

AIM Social, Scientific And Medical Council