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AIM Digest
PO Box 2282
BATH, BA1 2QY, UK
T: +44 (0)1225 471444
F: +44 (0)1225 427444

E: info@Aim-Digest.com
Web sites: www.aim-digest.com
www.drinkingandyou.com

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Please make cheques/drafts in British pounds sterling, dollars or Euros payable to AIM Digest at the above address

Peter Duff – Chairman,
T: +44 (0)1225 471444
E: peter.duff@aim-digest.com

Helena Conibear – Executive Director,
T: +44 (0)1300 341601
E: helena.conibear@aim-digest.com

Alison Rees - Deputy Editor
E: alison.rees@aim-digest.com

Sherry Webster – Finance and
Administration Director
T: +44 (0)1225 471444
E: sherry.webster@aim-digest.com

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US

Due to a great increase in numbers of tourist visitors to wineries in the US (up from fewer than 340,000 to over 4,000,000 per annum in less than 20 years), the problems of inappropriate behaviour and 'winery crawls' have increasingly become an issue.

The Cayuga, Seneca and Keuka wine trails in New York State have therefore created an effective programme to guard against abusive behaviour by members of groups travelling in buses or limos. Companies or individuals are effectively banned from all premises if they cause a problem in one.

In Suffolk County, Long Island, New York, Executive Steve Levy has signed a social host law that makes it illegal for homeowners or renters 18 and older to knowingly allow underage drinking. Under the law, anyone caught doing so could face up to a \$250 fine for a first offence and up to a \$1,000 fine and a year in jail for a third offence. Nassau County, also in Long Island, enacted a similar law in July.

Israel

Israel's Ministerial Committee on Legislation has approved a bill prohibiting alcohol advertising on television and radio, in newspapers that target children and teens, and on public transportation. Furthermore, alcohol ads would no longer be allowed to feature celebrities under age 40, or anyone wearing a uniform, swimsuit, or other sportswear. In addition, alcoholic beverages would be required to carry warning labels. Before final approval, the bill must pass two more readings in the Israeli legislature.

Namibia

The Namibia Ministry of Health and Social Services just released a UNICEF paper titled "A Future in Doubt: Youth Alcohol Abuse in Namibia". The paper states that youth alcohol abuse has become severe in Namibia, with 10 being the average age of starting to drink alcohol. Officials point to alcohol abuse among young people as an important factor in the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Namibians consume on average up to 10 litres of alcohol a week. Home-brewed beer is the most popular drink, accounting for 67% of national consumption and 73% of all female consumption.

Authorities are calling for tougher laws against the sale of alcohol to under-18's, as well as increased taxation. The paper recommends that suppliers of alcohol to children under 18 be arrested and prosecuted, and that youth access to alcohol be curbed by restricting outlets, particularly illegal bars and clubs, as well as by arresting and prosecuting people and establishments found to be selling liquor and home-brewed drinks to children under 18.

Celebrities and public figures are recommended as advocates of responsible drinking. The Ministry of Health and Social Services and its partners have initiated the Coalition on Responsible Drinking, which the paper says should be strengthened to expand its work in prevention, legislation enforcement, and treatment.

Enhanced moderate drinking findings

December and January has seen the publication of some interesting papers confirming moderate alcohol consumption as part of a healthy diet and lifestyle.

There is good fuel for new year resolutions in research findings from the EPIC Norfolk population study - Moderate drinking (up to 14 UK units of 8g a week) together with not smoking, being active, having a high vitamin C level (indicating a diet high in fruits and vegetables) leads to an average of 14 years increase in life expectancy - reflecting the findings of Chiuve, Hu, Stampfer and Rimm et al in 2006 (who also include maintaining a low body mass index) (visit www.alcoholinmoderation.com medical archive on moderate drinking for the 2006 papers).

Khaw KT et al studied the relationship between lifestyle and mortality in a prospective population study of 20,244 men and women aged 45–79 years with no known cardiovascular disease or cancer at baseline survey in 1993–1997, living in the UK, and followed up to 2006. Those who followed the four healthy lifestyle factors, had about a quarter the risk of dying over the follow-up period as those who had none of the healthy behaviours.

Their findings have been echoed in a study reported in the **European Heart Journal** which finds that people who neither drink nor exercise have a 30 to 49% higher risk of heart disease than people who do one or both of the activities. The Danish study is one of the largest of its kind to examine the combined effect of drinking and exercise and found there were additional protective effects gained from doing both.

The researchers collected information on the drinking and exercise habits of nearly 12,000 men and women aged 20 years or older between 1981 and 1983. Over the next 20 years, some 1,200 of the participants died from heart disease and about 5,900 died from other causes. Non-drinkers had a 30 - 31% higher risk of heart disease compared to moderate drinkers (1-14 drinks a week), no matter how much physical activity they undertook. People who had the lowest risk of dying from any cause were physically active, moderate drinkers while those at highest risk were the physically inactive, heavy drinkers.

Risk of second heart attack

The SHEEP study, by Kenneth J. Mukamal et al, published in the **American Heart Journal**, has found that moderate alcohol drinking might have beneficial effects on several aspects of long-term prognosis after an acute heart attack - risk for a second attack or death was lowest for those drinking between 5 and 20g of alcohol a day when compared with abstainers or heavy drinkers.

For those suffering from diabetes

Diabetes care reported research in December by Dr. Iris Shai of Ben Gurion University that found that moderate drinkers had lower blood sugar levels than non drinkers. The researchers randomized 109 adults with type 2 diabetes who had previously not drunk to have 150 ml of wine (13g alcohol) or a non-alcoholic diet beer (control) daily with dinner for 3 months.

A total of 91 patients completed the trial. The age range of the study subjects was 41 to 74 years. Average fasting blood sugar levels were

139.6 mg/do at the outset in the intervention group, and it fell to 118.0 mg/do after 3 months with alcohol consumption.

Good news for the elderly - No Need For Reduced Alcohol Consumption In Later Life

Some recommendations in 2007, including those from the NIAAA suggested that elderly consumers should reduce their alcohol consumption to half the current daily sensible drinking guidelines. Several recent papers suggest that the general population guidelines should apply.

Findings reported in the **American Journal of Epidemiology** in January 2008 have shown that moderate alcohol consumption may protect against leg artery disease, a condition in which the arteries in the legs become narrowed or clogged with fatty deposits, reducing blood flow to the legs.

In the study, researchers found that elderly men and women who reported drinking from one to 13 servings of alcohol a week had a 44% lower risk of being hospitalized for leg artery disease, compared with elderly men and women who reported no alcohol consumption.

“These results are consistent with the long-standing observation that moderate drinkers have a lower risk of heart attack, which is also caused by blockages in arteries,” stated Dr. Kenneth J. Mukamal, of Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Centre, in Brookline, Massachusetts.

Two studies from the Penninsula Medical School in the South West of England have found that as long as the elderly adhere to the same guidelines for alcohol consumption as younger adults, regular moderate drinking poses no additional risks

Enhanced moderate drinking findings - (cont'd from page 3)

to the over 65s, and could confer health benefits.

Researchers assessed the drinking levels of over 13,000 older people in England and the US and looked at the effects on physical disability, mortality, cognitive function, depression, and well-being. They concluded that moderate drinking is fine for the over 65s - and in some cases is better than not drinking at all.

An analysis of more than 12,000 older women found that drinking moderate amounts of alcohol in line with national recommendations has health benefits for those aged over 70 in Australia. The results

published in the *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society* indicate that survival rates were lower in women who did not consume alcohol. Those who drank the National Health and Medical Research Council recommended levels of no more than two standard drinks a day on average had better outcomes.

“Our data indicates that these guidelines can safely apply to these women at older ages,” said Prof Byles, director of the University’s Priority Research Centre for Gender, Health and Ageing.

The research referred to in this article is reported in more detail in the Medical News section.

Portman Group report on responsibility messages in 2007

The research carried out by the Portman Group with its members, found that the Drinkaware Trust’s website address and responsible drinking messages have appeared on three billion drinks packages and on £150 million worth of advertising in 2007.

“Despite falling numbers of binge drinkers, too many people still drink excessively. That’s why our member companies are investing millions of pounds in the Drinkaware Trust to educate more people about sensible drinking,” commented David Poley Chief Executive of The Portman Group.

Under 18s drink awareness website launched

The Drinkaware Trust has launched a website for under eighteen year olds called the www.truthaboutbooze.com after consulting with the age group itself.

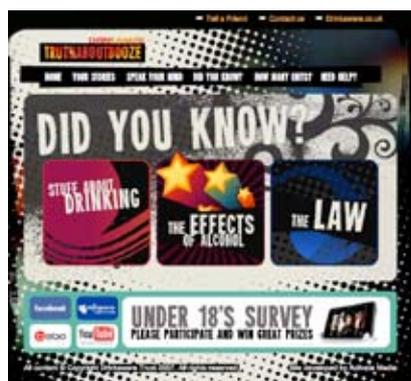
CEO Jean Collingwood commented: ‘Our research shows that youngsters believe the anti-drink message is being diluted by the official approach and patronising slogans. What they want is real information and facts on the effects of drinking, but without being patronised. Talking down to teenagers, in particular, only alienates and prevents them addressing the real problems. This is the first time that young people have been asked directly what methods would help them and their friends from falling into the trap of drinking and one we hope will stay on everyone’s agenda.

The final product is a website that is characteristic of the sites regularly engaged with by teenagers such as Bebo, YouTube and MySpace and

designed by young people for young people.

“They want real, practical information, but they want it to be interactive and bite-sized. They want blogs and to be able to talk and learn from each other online about their own personal experiences and problems they face”, added Ms Collingwood.

Users of www.truthaboutbooze.com can flick through cases studies, watch educational videos and discuss alcohol related topics in the dedicated forums. They can also chat and discuss issues concerning alcohol that relate directly to them.



Alcohol related UK hospital admissions for under 14s lower

Official figures supplied by the Information Centre for Health and Social Care show that 1,340 children under-14 were taken to English NHS hospitals suffering from alcohol poisoning or having fallen victim to drink-related illness or accidents last year.

The figures showed a continued drop on previous years, reflecting the overall fall in underage drinking, with 1,441 drunk youngsters across the country having been hospitalised due to alcohol in 2005-06, 1,587 in 2004-05 and more than 4,600 in the three years prior to that.

More than 25% of the admissions were in the North West, with 178 treated in Yorkshire and the Humber, 155 in the West Midlands and 125 in the South West. Another 199 under-14s were treated in London.

Doctors call for alcohol price increase in UK

Senior doctors called on the UK government to raise the price of alcohol as part of a series of tough measures to cut the harm caused by excessive drinking.

Ian Gilmore, President of the Royal College of Physicians and Nick Sheron, a liver specialist at Southampton University Hospital, said attempts to change people's behaviour through education or public information had not worked.

Writing in the Christmas issue of the BMJ magazine, they said raising prices, banning alcohol advertising and reducing its availability should be considered instead.

"To suggest, as producers and

retailers do, that increasing the price of alcohol would not reduce alcohol-related harm goes against the evidence and the fundamental principles of marketing -- product, price, promotion, and place," they state.

The doctors argued that figures showed that alcohol was a major health and social problem.

Nick Sheron will talk at AIM's Forum on the 13th March stating that he sees that the industry has an important and legitimate part to play in the improvement of drinking culture in UK.

For further details and to register, contact Sherry Webster via sherry.Webster@aim-digest.com

Alcohol Strategy Local Implementation Toolkit

A local implementation toolkit has been launched to serve as a resource to help local teams develop strategies to address alcohol-related crime, ill health and other harm in line with 'Safe, Sensible, Social', the UK alcohol strategy.

It has been written specifically to help alcohol leads and others within local authorities, primary care trust, children's services and delivery partnerships such as Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships and Drug and Alcohol Action Teams - the people most likely to be responsible for developing and delivering alcohol strategies locally. It will also be useful to individual agencies tackling alcohol misuse.

The toolkit provides a step-by-step process on how to develop a local alcohol strategy, and suggests a range of activities to help with the three key strategic areas of health, community safety and children and young people.

A copy of the toolkit is available at <http://www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk/drugsalcohol/drugsalcohol097.htm>

UK personal responsibility advertising campaign planned

The Department of Health will run a Spring Campaign based around personal responsibility and drinking. The advertising company, VCCP, is planning a multi media campaign focusing on unit awareness and binge drinking. The industry

was also asked at the November meeting at 10 Downing Street with Gordon Brown to consider committing 1 in 6 commercials to a responsible drinking theme. This proposal will be discussed by the Communications stakeholders group in January.

UK Office of National Statistics - new report

Statistics released by the ONS on 22 January show that the percentage of the UK males drinking more than 21 units a week fell from 29% in 2000 to 23% 2006. Similarly, women's harmful drinking (more than 14 units per week) is down from 17% in 2000 to 12% in 2006. Binge drinking among 16-24 year-old men has also continued to decline in the last year and levels have stabilised among young women. Awareness of alcohol units has risen from 79% of the population to 85% in the last

ten years. The report is available on the [ONS site](#).

In December, the ONS reported that it will update its methods for calculating alcohol consumption, as past research may have underestimated alcohol use by up to 30%, because drinks are now served in larger measures and are becoming stronger. Estimates using the new assumptions about alcohol content are expected to rise from an average weekly intake of 10.8 units of alcohol to 14.3 units.

UK review of BAC levels February 08

The UK government's Alcohol Strategy CSR Group has reported that the Department for Transport will consult on the drink-drive limit in February 2008 and the Department of Health will be commissioning an independent review of the uptake and expected uptake of the 'voluntary label format' in 2008. The terms of reference for the review are yet to be agreed by the group.

English drink drive convictions for women increase from small base, UK Christmas figures improve

Figures released by the Department for Transport show that the number of women who failed breath tests after road accidents and injuries across Britain increased from 869 in 1995 to 1,040 in 2006 – a rise of 20% in 11 years.

Figures published by the Ministry of Justice also show that the number of women found guilty of drink or drug-driving offences rose by 60% in England and Wales over the same period.

Women now account for 12% of all convictions, compared with 7% in 1995. Although men still constitute the vast majority of offenders, the number of male offenders dropped by 3% between 2004 and 2005.

“Men still make up the vast

majority of drink-drive offenders,” said Sheila Rainger, acting director of the RAC Foundation. “But we are seeing a worrying rise in the number of women who are driving while over the limit.

“This is one side effect of increased equality that we really don’t want to see. As well as competing in the workplace, women are also gaining on men in terms of aggressive driving and speeding as well as driving under the influence of drink and drugs.”

Motoring groups state that many women are not familiar with the limits even though they have been in place since 1967. A recent survey of 4,000 motorists of both sexes found that more than 80% did not

know the current limit.

The number of motorists caught drinking and driving in the Christmas period fell across England and Wales by nearly a fifth despite police carrying out more tests.

Figures from the Association of Chief Police Officers show 7,800 drivers tested positive, compared with 9,700 drivers caught in the 2006 crackdown.

There was also a slight reduction in the overall number of drivers arrested for drink driving in Scotland over Christmas compared to 2006. A total of 105 women and 652 men were charged during the first three weeks of the festive campaign to 28 December.

NICE releases guidance for alcohol education in primary and secondary schools in UK

New PSHE education curricula are being introduced in schools from September 2008 that move away from an emphasis on content and instead promote concepts such as ‘healthy lifestyles. They are to be tailored to meet individual needs. Alcohol education will involve promoting a healthy lifestyle as excessive alcohol use is linked to a range of health and social problems.

The content guidance includes:

‘- Acknowledgement that alcohol use is the cultural norm among most adults in the UK. Some people believe it is normal and acceptable for young people under 18 to drink. Some individuals and groups find alcohol use among any age group unacceptable. It is important to take individual, social, cultural, economic and religious factors into

account when delivering alcohol education programmes.

- While some individuals may be more vulnerable than others, it is inappropriate only to focus on those individuals. Children and young people from all backgrounds and in all types of school may drink harmful amounts of alcohol.

- Those delivering alcohol education programmes need to have the trust and respect of the children and young people involved. They should have received validated training and be able to provide accurate information using appropriate techniques.

- Work with children and young people who use alcohol may lead to confidentiality issues. Where a child or young person requires individual guidance and support,

best practice guidelines on consent and confidentiality should be followed (DH 2001).

- Children and young people should be encouraged to involve their parents or carers and the best interests of the child or young person should be the primary concern. This is in line with the duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils, imposed on all schools and colleges of further education under the Education Act 2002 and Children Act 1989 (HM Government 2006)’.



To read the full guidance, visit <http://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/index.jsp?action=byID&o=11893>

New Scottish licensing laws to cost £4 million

Around 100 extra police officers and staff will be needed to cope with the country's new licensing laws at a cost of more than £4 million, MSPs have been warned.

Police chiefs warned that the time needed to process liquor licences would increase from 30 minutes to five hours, 30 minutes for renewals and seven hours, 30 minutes for new applications.

The chiefs said whereas now they would normally deal with 20,000 licence renewals across Scotland over three years, they will now have to handle the same number in 18 months - plus 1,200 fresh applications.

The report from the Association of Chief Police Officers in Scotland warned unless there was extra cash, forces would have to take officers away from other duties. The total cost of extra staffing was put at £4,137,066.

The new Licensing Act will not fully come into force until August 2009, but the start of the switchover for licences will begin in February next year.

A Scottish Government spokeswoman said: "The biggest drain on police resources is alcohol-fuelled violence and disorder, which the Licensing Act is designed to help tackle."

UK 'Youth Alcohol Action Plan' to be published Spring 2008

The Government's Children's Plan was launched in December with goals outlined for 2020 and £1 billion of funding earmarked for the plan over the next three years.

Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families, Ed Balls, said the alcohol action plan would be published in the spring to tackle the problem of under-age drinkers. It will aim to improve alcohol education in schools tackle parental alcohol misuse and consider the case for further action on alcohol advertising.

Balls added: "Our job is to intervene early to prevent children engaging in risky behaviours like drug taking or binge drinking, disengaging from education or getting into crime."

The Schools Secretary raised his concerns over the nature of alcohol advertising and cited research by Alcohol Concern claiming there is a "spike" in alcohol advertising between 4pm and 6pm.

But Tim Bateman, senior policy advisor at crime reduction charity Nacro, said "The action plan needs to recognise there appears to be a difference in attitudes towards alcohol in this country to those elsewhere."

Rosie Chadwick, director of prevention services at charity Crime Concern, stated that educating young people over the dangers of alcohol would be important in combating teen drinking. Her survey work with young people involved with Positive Futures has demonstrated that teenagers don't understand the dangers that alcohol can pose.

Drinkaware in Ireland distribute alcohol awareness information cards

'A glass of stout / lager / cider, a small glass of wine or a pub measure of spirits is equal to one standard drink, and one standard drink takes one hour to leave your system'; was is the key message this Christmas from MEAS, the alcohol responsibility organisation behind drinkaware.ie.

"We have found that many people are unaware of what is a standard drink and the period of time it takes our bodies to eliminate it. There are lots of myths out there about cures and soakage strategies. The only cure is time and it takes on average one hour to get rid of one standard drink. It is really important for motorists to be aware of this, especially the morning after a night out" commented MEAS Chief Executive, Fionnuala Sheehan.

One million 'drinkaware' information cards in English, Irish and Polish have been produced to support the recently launched drinkaware.ie Road Safety Authority Anti Drink Driving Campaign which focuses on the dangers of 'Morning After' driving.

The 'ATM' sized information card details what a standard drink is, how long it takes your body to get rid of it, as well as providing space to write down taxi numbers.

The drinkaware cards were being distributed through An Garda Siochana and the large number of organisations and companies supporting the campaign.

Alcohol seized from under-18s in UK

Police from 21 forces across the country seized over 3,700 litres of alcohol from youths aged under 18 drinking in public places during an Autumn campaign which ran from 8 October to 5 November 2007. The results of the campaign have been released by the Home Office. Police used new powers under the Violent Crime Reduction Act 2006 to disperse groups where alcohol related crime or disorder was suspected. The campaign focussed in particular on the weekends, half term school holiday, Halloween and Bonfire Night. Police Officers and Community Support Officers visited public places known to be underage drinking hotspots. Home Office Minister Vernon Coaker said:

“This campaign was designed to bring to bear the full range of police tools and powers to tackle the harm caused to individuals and communities by underage drinking. It will not be the last.

“Quite simply we will not tolerate drinking in public by under-18s or anyone else where it leads to anti-social and intimidating behaviour.

“Confiscation complements our efforts to tackle the supply of alcohol to children. The enforcement of underage sales law has hardened dramatically in recent years and I know that many alcohol retailers have raised their game and now routinely apply ‘Challenge 21’ criteria to anyone who looks underage”.

December saw a national Responsible Alcohol Sales Campaign which focused again on underage sales and alcohol-related disorder targeting the small proportion of problem premises.

Over-30s ignore alcohol advice

People in their 30s and 40s are less likely to drink within the government guidelines than those in their 20s, a poll has suggested.

A survey by YouGov found almost half of 30 to 50-year-olds confessed to drinking too much at times.

The poll was commissioned as part of a government campaign to encourage responsible drinking over Christmas. The government is warning people that regular heavy drinking at home could cause problems within 10 years of starting.

One in three of the 30 to 50-year-olds surveyed said that drinking too much had wrecked a night out for them at least once in the past year, and 44% said they hadn't learned to stick to the recommended number

of drinks (compared to 40% of those in their 20s).

Professor Ian Gilmore, president of the Royal College of Physicians and Chair of the Alcohol Health Alliance, said:

“Many people underestimate the amount of units they are drinking because drinks have been getting stronger, and glasses larger, over the past couple of decades - a small glass of wine can now be two units, and large glasses three to four units.

“People over 30 should be aware that their body is less likely to cope with the after-effects of alcohol, think carefully about the weekly amount they are drinking and stick to the safe limits so as to avoid alcohol-related disease.”

New drink drive limit proposed for motorcyclists in N. Ireland

Motorcyclists in Northern Ireland will face a lower alcohol limit than car drivers, if proposals from Northern Ireland minister Arlene Foster become law. The new limit, which will only allow for 20mg of alcohol per 100 millilitres of blood, means riders will be over the limit after just a half pint of lager, effectively making the proposals an outright ban on drink riding.

The proposal is to reduce the limit for drivers also, but to 50mg. A spokeswoman for Northern Ireland's Department of the Environment said: “The proposed lower limit for motorcyclists reflects the greater vulnerability of bikers if involved in a collision and the greater potential for even the most minor error to result in a motorcyclist losing control with catastrophic consequences”.

Press articles about alcohol to carry health warning in France

A French court has ruled all press articles about alcohol must also contain a health warning. The decision came against an article headlined “The triumph of champagne” in Le Parisien, which reviewed various brands of champagne. The National Association for the Prevention of

Alcoholism and Addiction took the paper to court. Le Parisien was ordered to pay £3,727 in damages to the Government-funded body. The court ruled that despite being an editorial article, it should have conformed to advertising regulations and included a health warning on excessive drinking.

France population - percentage of drinkers declining

New data from the French research institute INRA, collected and collated in association with national government organisation Viniflor, report a continued decline of French wine consumption. The report is published every 5 years. The latest figures show that the proportion of non-drinkers in France rose from 11% to 16.2% in 2005.

Although wine is still the preferred

alcoholic beverage choice for regular drinkers over 35, under 35s are more likely to prefer beer.

Between 1990 and 2005, the percentage of the population who drank at least occasionally fell from 89% to 84%, a trend caused by the fall in the number of regular drinkers.

Bottled waters are now the most widely-distributed drink with 84%

of French people drinking them. Appetisers and still and sparkling wines continue to lose market share, the with the percentage of people consuming appetisers declining from 73% to 65% for appetisers, from 70% to 65% for still wines and from 69% to 61% for sparkling wines. The percentage of the french population who consume beer has also declined.

New Scottish Government initiative to reach youth with drink drive message

The Scottish Government is paying for a trial scheme to beam anti-drink adverts directly into X-Box games across Scotland.

The adverts will appear on virtual billboards within the games consoles that thousands of young Scots received as Christmas presents.

Transport Minister Stewart Stevenson said that with road accidents continuing to rise, it was time to look at innovative solutions.

“With statistics showing that road deaths, particularly among young people, are continuing to rise, it is clear we must look at new ways of getting road safety messages across.

“This is a huge opportunity to try and reach a new audience. 73% of UK 15-24 year olds have access to a gaming console in their home. The technology is non-intrusive, subtle, but the message can be seen in the background, loud and clear”.

Michael McDonnell Michael McDonnell, Director of Road Safety Scotland, said:

“We need to look beyond the conventional methods of addressing key road safety issues which affect young people, and I believe that positioning of the drink-drive message in online games will serve as an ever-present reminder to young Scots about the consequences of doing”.

The project will initially transmit anti-drink drive messages. However, if successful, the technology can deliver any road safety message needed directly into any game.

Some of the games to carry the ads will be: Need for Speed: Carbon, Need for Speed:proStreet, Project Gotham Racing 4, Pro Evolution Soccer 2008, NBA Live.



Alcohol use rising amongst Balkan youth

An article in the Southeast European Times in December discussed rising youth drinking in Macedonia, Croatia, and Romania.

Under Macedonian law, teens under 18 are prohibited from drinking alcohol, but IDs are often not checked at cafe bars, discotheques, supermarkets, and shops. In general, the law has little effect.

The article states that because penalties are mild and Macedonian courts are notoriously inefficient, violators are rarely prosecuted.

In Croatia, a study by the national health institute revealed that 38% of male teens and 16% of female teens drink alcohol regularly. As in Macedonia, drinking starts early, at around 13. Croatia has no national strategy on underage drinking, and prevention occurs only in schools and families.

In Romania, almost half of children between 11 and 14 have tried alcohol at least once, but regular drinking in this age group is only 4%. Although Romania has launched campaigns to prevent drug abuse and encourage safe sex, no youth alcohol prevention campaigns have been undertaken.

UK one of lowest alcohol consuming countries in Europe

A new report by Forbes, shows that all except one of the World's 15 Heaviest-Drinking Countries are in Europe. The report was based on the 2006 survey data from the Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development, which tracks per capita alcohol consumption around the globe.

The rankings are based on the number of litres of pure alcohol consumed per person per year, from beer, wine and spirits combined.

European countries hold the top 14 places, with Australia ranking 15th. Consumption across most countries in Europe has declined markedly over the last thirty years (Spain, France and Italy) with consumers drinking less but higher value products. Countries such as Ireland and the UK saw rises in consumption from a lower base in the 1980's and 1990's, but adults are still drinking considerably less than in the 1920's for example and trends have peaked,

with choice of beverage changing (i.e. more wine and less beer). A 2006 study by the Weinberg Group, a consulting firm that reported findings of several published health and consumption trends regarding alcohol use in Europe, showed that Europe generally has greater social and religious history and acceptance of drinking than the rest of the world does, with alcohol used more in social settings and at family meals. "A number of social, political and cultural factors have been reported to influence drinking behaviour," the report concluded. Among them: traditions that have young and old imbibing around the dinner table and at social events, and varying levels of alcohol taxes in different countries.

Luxembourg continues to be the highest per capita consumer of alcohol at 15.5 litres of pure alcohol in a year, followed by France (14.2 litres), Ireland (also 14.2 litres), Hungary (12 litres) and the Czech Republic (11.8 litres). The Czechs, lead the world in annual beer consumption with over 150 litres per person.

'Ranking of international per capita alcohol consumption'				
Rank	Country	Pure annual alcohol consumption litres per capita	Beer consumption litres per capita	Legal drinking age
1	Luxembourg	15.5	84.4	16 (beer); 18 (spirits)
2	France	14.2	35.5	16 (beer); 18 (spirits)
3	Ireland	14.2	131.1	18
4	Hungary	12	75.3	18 to purchase (none for consumption)
5	Czech Republic	11.8	156.9	18
6	Spain	11.5	83.8	16 (drinking); 18 (purchasing)
7	Denmark	11.5	89.9	18 (bars only); otherwise no limit
8	Portugal	12.9	59.6	16
9	Switzerland	11.2	57.3	16 (beer); 18 (spirits)
10	Austria	11.1	108.3	16 (beer); 18 (spirits)
11	Germany	10.5	116.8	14 (beer); 16 (wine); 18 (spirits)
12	United Kingdom	10.4	99	18 (for purchase)
13	Belgium	10.3	93	16
14	Netherlands	10.1	79	16 (beer); 18 (spirits)

Anheuser-Busch support designated drivers

According to a recent survey conducted by Nielsen Media Research for Anheuser-Busch, 154 million American adults will be using designated driver during the holidays.

To give support to this life-saving practice, Anheuser-Busch has remade the popular Ides of March song "Vehicle." First released in 1970, the song, played on local radio stations throughout the country.

Anheuser-Busch's remake salutes America's designated drivers who have been a "Bud" for their friends and families by getting everyone home safely.

"The concept of the designated driver has truly become part of our culture over the past two decades," said Carol Clark, vice president of Corporate Social Responsibility for Anheuser-Busch. "The holidays are a great time to celebrate with our

family and friends by choosing designated drivers before the parties start and helping each other stay safe."



ALCOHOL 101 PLUS - website launch

The Century Council has announced that its interactive Alcohol 101 Plus programme designed to help college students make safe and responsible decisions about alcohol, is now available in a new online format at www.alcohol101plus.org. In the previous CD-ROM format, Alcohol 101 Plus materials have been distributed to over 2,500 colleges and universities throughout the US.

Set on a virtual campus, this programme features content designed to address the problems of specific at-risk populations in

college settings: freshmen, Greeks, student-athletes and judicial policy offenders. Each segment explores special issues and decisions regarding alcohol, for students in each of these groups. Through interactive video scenarios users have the opportunity to make virtual decisions for virtual characters.

Alcohol 101 Plus provides a safe environment which allows users to see the consequences of their decisions and offers the chance to try again. In addition to the original contents, the website features the B4Udrink tutorial which provides

the user with the opportunity to learn important information about how alcohol can affect their body, friends, and campus life.

The programme also offers educators the including complementary tools: online pre- and post- surveys for students, access to test results, and downloadable educational materials including a Facilitator's Guide with learning objectives and recommended activities for each content section of the programme.

For more information, please visit www.alcohol101plus.org.

Summary health statistics for US adults

Results from the recently published US 'National Health Interview Survey, 2006 - Alcohol Drinking Status' show that overall, 48% of adults 18 years of age and over were current regular drinkers, 12% were current infrequent drinkers, 6% were former regular drinkers, 8% were former infrequent drinkers, and 25% were lifetime abstainers.

57% of men were current regular drinkers compared with 39% of women. Men were also more likely to be former regular drinkers than were women. Women were more likely to be current or former infrequent drinkers or lifetime abstainers than were men. As age increased, the percentage of adults who were current regular drinkers decreased.

Asian adults were more likely to be lifetime abstainers compared with other single race groups. When results are considered by single race and ethnicity, 53% of non-Hispanic white adults were current regular drinkers compared

with 39% of Hispanic adults and 35% of non-Hispanic black adults. Hispanic adults and non-Hispanic black adults were almost twice as likely as non-Hispanic white adults to be lifetime abstainers.

Educational attainment and family income were positively associated with current regular drinking status and inversely associated with being a lifetime abstainer. Among adults under 65 years of age, 55% of those who had private health insurance coverage were current regular drinkers compared with 47% of those who were uninsured and 31% of those who had Medicaid health care coverage.

Among adults aged 65 and over, 37% of those who had private health insurance coverage were current regular drinkers compared with 28% of those who had only Medicare health care coverage and 19% of those who had Medicaid and Medicare health care coverage.

Adults who were living with a partner were more likely to be current

regular drinkers compared with other marital status categories.

Regionally, 31% of adults living in the South were lifetime abstainers, in contrast to 27% in the West, 19% in the Midwest, and 19% in the Northeast.

24% of non-Hispanic white women were lifetime abstainers compared with 49% of Hispanic women and 44% of non-Hispanic black women. Conversely, 46% of non-Hispanic white women were current regular drinkers compared with 25% of non-Hispanic black women and 24% of Hispanic women. Among men, 15% of non-Hispanic white men were lifetime abstainers compared with 23% of Hispanic men and 26% of non-Hispanic black men; 61% of non-Hispanic white men were current regular drinkers compared with 53% of Hispanic men and 48% of non-Hispanic black men.

The full report is available at http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/series/sr_10/sr10_235.pdf

Survey shows most Canadian beer drinkers plan ahead for ride home

Labatt and Ipsos Reid have released a public opinion survey on Canadian beer drinkers' transportation plans during the holiday season. The survey demonstrates that Canadian beer drinkers, particularly those aged 18-24, have accepted the message that drinking and driving don't mix. The results of the joint survey find that most (88%) beer drinkers generally have a plan or make arrangements to get home safely when they are going out to an activity where they might be drinking alcohol.

The survey included 4,501 beer drinkers across Canada. The survey found that younger Canadian drinkers are more likely (91%) than those middle-aged (89%) or older (85%) to claim to make plans or arrangements to get home safely after being out at a place where they might drink alcohol. Female

(94%) drinkers are more likely than males (85%) to do this as well. Atlantic Canadian drinkers (93%) are the most likely to make these types of arrangements, followed by Ontarians (90%). British Columbians (85%) are the least likely

"These data are very encouraging," says John Wright, Senior Vice President of Ipsos Reid. *"They demonstrate that Canadian beer drinkers appear to be highly aware of the need to plan ahead and are placing significant emphasis on finding alternative ways of getting home safely after a night out with friends."*

Nearly one half (46%) respondents say they most often have a designated driver in their group to drive them home, whereas one quarter (25%) rely on public transportation. 8% indicate that they have somebody

pick them up, and 9% say they usually walk home or go to a family or friend's home for the night. Younger drinkers (34%) are more likely than middle-aged (25%) or older (16%) drinkers to rely on public transportation. Older drinkers (52%) are more likely than middle-aged (46%) or younger drinkers (41%) to use a designated driver. Females (49%) are more likely than their male counterparts (44%) to elect a designated driver.

Neil Sweeney, Labatt Breweries of Canada stated, *"The results of the survey demonstrate that the majority of those beer drinkers celebrating during the festive season are making responsible choices and are planning ahead for their safety."*

For full tabular results, please visit the Ipsos Reid website at www.ipsos.ca.

2007 Monitoring The Future survey results released

The National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) and the University of Michigan released the 2007 Monitoring the Future (MTF) survey, which has measured adolescent alcohol, drug, and cigarette use and related attitudes nationwide annually since 1975. Participants are 8th-, 10th-, and 12th-graders in the US.

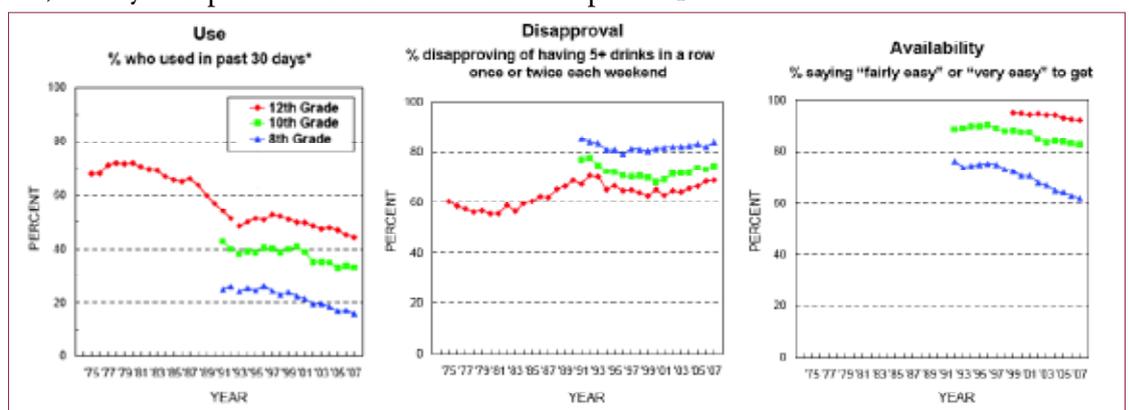
The survey's alcohol use measures include (among others) any alcohol use and self-reported drunkenness during one's lifetime, the past year, and the past month, and binge drinking in the past 2 weeks. The 2007 MTF report states that teen alcohol use, and use of many of the illicit drugs, has declined

since 1996. For example, 8th-grade alcohol use in the past month has fallen by 40% since the peak level in 1996.

Between 2006 and 2007 small declines in alcohol use occurred in all three grades. The 2007 results also include the following statistics. For 8th- and 10th-graders, alcohol use in the past month was 15.9% and 33.4%, respectively, and self-reported drunkenness in the past

month was 5.5% and 18.1%, respectively. Prevalence of binge drinking in the past 2 weeks was 10.3% in 8th-graders and 21.9% in 10th-graders. Past-month use of flavoured alcoholic beverages was 12.2% in 8th-graders and 22.1% in 10th-graders.

To read the survey data visit http://www.monitoringthefuture.org/pressreleases/07drugpr_complete.pdf



Australian and New Zealand - warning labels for pregnant women

Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) is inviting comment on the concept of putting pregnancy warning labels on beers, wines and spirits. The application has been proposed by the Alcohol Advisory Council of New Zealand (ALAC) but would also apply in Australia if ultimately approved.

Under the scheme “suppliers would be required to place a label on alcoholic beverage containers advising of the risks of consuming alcohol when planning to become

pregnant and during pregnancy,” the regulator said in a statement.

“ALAC’s reasons include the view that health advisory labels would enhance national strategies for discouraging drinking while pregnant and that no level of alcohol consumption has been determined to be safe for the foetus.”

They estimate that 1% of Australian babies are born with some degree of Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder.

National Health and Medical Research Council guidelines written

in 2001 advise pregnant women to drink no more than two standard drinks a day and less than seven a week.

They also “may consider not drinking at all”, as new draft guidelines currently under consideration advise that abstinence is the safest option.

FSANZ will accept public submissions on the proposal until February 6 before deciding whether to disregard it or allow it to be assessed further.

Sporting clubs embrace the Australian Drug Foundation’s ‘Good Sports’ programme



The Good Sports programme is a free community initiative that aims to help sporting clubs manage alcohol responsibly and reduce alcohol related problems, such as binge and underage drinking, as well as drink driving.

It was initiated after evidence emerged that community-based sports clubs contribute to alcohol problems by accepting and promoting excessive drinking and providing inappropriate role models for young people. A study by the Australian Drug Foundation of more than 500 young people found that more than 30% of 13-17 year olds had participated in unsupervised drinking at a sports club, and 51% of drinkers at sports

clubs are consuming alcohol at harmful or hazardous levels.

Recent research by the Centre for Youth Drug Studies has shown that members of Good Sports clubs drink less than half the amount consumed by members of non-Good Sports sporting clubs.

The ‘Good Sports’ programme began in Victoria where now more than 1,200 clubs are now involved, but the programme has spread to New South Wales, South Australia, Tasmania, Queensland and the Northern Territory.

To applaud the success of the programme, Good Sports held a celebration at Albert Sailing Club. Good Sports National Manager Tony Kiers commented, “The programme helps clubs to manage alcohol responsibly and create a more welcoming, family-friendly environment for members and supporters”.

NIAAA College drinking report



An Updated version of the NIAAA report ‘What Colleges Need To Know - an update on College drinking’ has been released.

The contents include new information on:

- College Drinking and Its Consequences
- Interventions—What Is the New Research Telling Us?
- Defining Binge Drinking
- Are College Students at Higher Risk?
- Treatment for Alcohol Problems: An Unmet Need
- College Drinking—A Global Issue
- Ongoing Research and Collaborative Efforts
- Tracking Students’ Drinking Patterns
- A Word on Alcohol Poisoning
- Questions Campus Leaders Should Ask

The report is available from http://www.collegedrinkingprevention.gov/1College_Bulletin-508_361C4E.pdf

Type of social event effects drinking behaviour

Researchers at San Diego State University and the University of Michigan have determined that environment and party activities affect drinking behaviour.

“Most studies use survey methods that require people to recall their drinking behavior - days, weeks or months prior - and such recall is not always accurate,” observed corresponding author J. D. Clapp, “By going out into the field and doing observations and surveys, including breath tests for alcohol concentrations, we were able to mitigate many of the problems associated with recall of behaviour and complex settings.”

The team observed 1,304 young adults (751 men, 553 women) at 66 college parties over the course of three semesters. The parties all took place in private residences close to an urban public university in southern California. The team noted party environment, surveyed attendees and collected blood-alcohol concentrations.

The researchers found that playing

drinking games, having a personal history of binge drinking, attending a party with many other intoxicated people, and attending a themed event all predicted higher blood alcohol levels. The researchers expressed surprise over the finding that women at themed events drank more heavily than their male peers.

Students who attended parties with the intention of socializing and people who attended larger parties drank less alcohol.

“From a methodological standpoint, our study illustrates that is possible and important to examine drinking behaviour in real-world settings,” Clapp said. “It is more difficult than doing Web surveys and the like but provides a much richer data set. Secondly, environmental factors are important.”

The team plans to expand its research to other environments, including bars.

Source: John D. Clapp et al. - Person and Environment Predictors of Blood Alcohol Concentrations: A Multi-Level Study of College Parties. *Alcoholism: Clinical and Experimental Research* 32 (1), 100-107.

US Traffic Safety and Alcohol Regulation - A symposium report

The US Traffic Research Board (TRB) held a symposium in June 2006 entitled ‘Traffic Safety and Alcohol Regulation’. The workshop was convened to discuss the role of alcohol regulation in traffic safety and to review and synthesize many of the most promising strategies in alcohol regulation.

The TRB have recently released a report providing an overview of the information presented and the discussions among the participants as well as the background papers prepared for the workshop.

To view the full report, please visit <http://onlinepubs.trb.org/onlinepubs/circulars/ec123.pdf>



US children keen to sip a drink – not to drink

A study by the University of Pittsburg has found that “Nearly 40% of children aged 8 to 10 have sipped or tasted alcohol, whereas only 6% have ever had a drink of alcohol”.

In their study, researchers at the University of Pittsburgh and the University of Michigan conducted a phone survey with a random sample of 452 children (214 boys, 238 girls), aged 8 or 10, and their families. The researchers asked the children about their experiences sipping or tasting alcohol and their perspective on their parents’ behaviour and beliefs about alcohol. The researchers then interviewed the parents separately.

“If one only asked about drinks, one would have the impression that few children at these ages have had experience with alcohol, whereas the reality is that nearly seven times as many have had some experience,” Donovan said. “Second, alcohol is most often sipped by children in the family context or during religious services, and almost never with friends or when alone. Third, children in families in which the parents drink are more curious and more likely to have sipped or tasted alcohol as young as age eight or 10.”

A third of the mothers and half of the fathers whose children have

sipped alcohol are not aware of it. The researchers said the results imply that children’s drinking behaviour is learned from their observation of their parents drinking, but the researchers noted that sipping or tasting alcohol at a young age is not correlated with other problem behaviours.

The research is the first in a series of studies planned for this group of families, with the intent of exploring the way in which family attitudes and drinking behaviour may affect children’s choices.

Source: *Alcoholism: Clinical & Experimental Research* (2008, January 6). Children Are Introduced To Sipping And Tasting Alcohol

Study examines problems associated 'preloading' alcohol before going out to bars and clubs

A study to be published in the Journal Addiction examines how young people consume often large amounts of alcohol before going for a night out in town and city centres, and how those drinking before going out are more likely to be involved in alcohol-related violence.

The study, undertaken by the Centre for Public Health, Liverpool John Moores University, interviewed 380 individuals between the ages of 18 and 35. It examined: their typical consumption of alcohol before going out in bars and clubs; their consumption while in bars and clubs; and the health and judicial consequences relating to their home and city centre drinking.

Key findings include:

- More than half of those interviewed usually pre-load with alcohol i.e. drink at their own or a friend's home before leaving for a night's drinking in a town or city centre.
- On average, women who pre-load consume over a third of their total amount of alcohol for that evening before leaving their own or their friends homes. Men who pre-load consume approximately a quarter of their nightly total before leaving home for their night out.
- On average, males and females consumed more than the recommended weekly maximum for an individual's alcohol consumption (21 units for a man and 14 units for a woman) in a single night out. Those who pre-loaded were four times more likely to consume over 20 units on a night out (including pre-loading, and bar and club drinking).

- Those who pre-loaded were also two and half times more likely to have been in a fight when going out in the last 12 months. In fact pre-loading was more strongly associated with being involved in nightlife violence than the total amount of alcohol an individual consumed.

The authors conclude that the vast differences in prices of alcohol between off- and on- licence sales are contributing to individuals increasingly consuming alcohol at home in order to cut costs. This in turn can result in people being drunk in residential areas before going out, alcohol-related problems on transport into town and city centres, and individuals arriving in town and city centres already inebriated and consequently more likely to suffer from alcohol-related accidents or involvement in alcohol-related violence.

Karen Hughes, who led the study, said **"Much pressure is being placed on bars and nightclubs to prevent sales of alcohol to drunk people, manage customer behaviour and reduce alcohol-related crime and disorder in nightlife. However if people are already drunk before they reach town and city centres this can represent an unfair burden on on-licensed premises to tackle problems stemming from alcohol purchased elsewhere"**.

EU growers restricted by regulations for low alcohol wines

Current EU legislation allows Member States to produce lower alcohol wines but not to sell them outside their domestic market. With market opportunities growing day by day, particularly in the UK, some European producers have chosen to flout the rules, pending a review of current legislation.

However, until the reform of the wine regime is over, there is little hope that legislation will change, leaving the field open for countries such as the US and Australia to export their low alcohol proposition and take up slots which otherwise would have been taken by EU growers. A case in point is the removal from sale last summer of two wines 'Sovio' a Spanish naturally light semi-sparkling wine, and 'Plume', a 9% vin de pays produced by Domaine La Colombette made using techniques authorised for US and Australian wines but not for EU wines.

An independent assessor recently backed the Food Standards Agency's refusal to allow the sale of 'Sovio Wine'. The producers of 'Plume' were advised earlier this month by Tesco to remove their wines from its warehouse. The estates wines have been replaced by McGuigans of Australia, which promotes its wines as being made from early-harvested grapes.

WHO to meet in January

The Executive Board (EB) of the World Health Organization (WHO) opens its twice-yearly session on 21 January 2008 in Geneva. In her report to the EB, the Director-General, Dr Margaret Chan, will highlight recent

public health successes and set out some of the threats to global health.

The 34-member Board will discuss a range of issues including strategies to reduce the harmful use of alcohol.

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AIM FORUM

Thursday, 13th March 2008

**Hosted by
The Wine and Spirit Education Trust**

**Registration from 9.15am,
Conference commences at 9.45am**

VENUE:

International Wine and Spirit Centre, 39-45 Bermondsey Street, London SE1 3XF

Conference Programme

9.45	<p>Helena Conibear, Executive Director of Alcohol in Moderation <i>Forum opening and introduction of the issues under scrutiny</i></p>
	<p>Marie Choquet (MA, BA, PhD), INSERM <i>Statistics and trends of alcohol consumption in Europe</i></p>
	<p>The European Sprints Organisation CEPS <i>The European Social and Policy context in which the industry is operating</i></p>
	<p>Nick Sheron, Royal College of Physicians Alcohol Committee and UK Alcohol Health Alliance <i>Changing the shape of the curve – common ground in alcohol policy</i></p>
	<p>John Walter, Director of Corporate Affairs, International Beam Global Spirits & Wine <i>Spirits in the spotlight</i></p>
	<p>David Cox, Managing Director Europe, Brown-Forman <i>Embedding CSR and ethics into company ethos - Issues facing the wine sector</i></p>
	<p>Inbev - Catherine Van Reeth, Director Global Alcohol Policy for InBev <i>Beer issues - the encouragement of more discerning drinkers</i></p>
	<p>Simon Kaye, Commercial Director Regent Inns <i>At the coal face: how accountable for individual behaviour can the on trade be?</i></p>
	<p>Richard Hitchcock, Operations & Marketing Director, Bottle Green <i>The importance of engaging smaller players - can we make a difference?</i></p>
	<p>Giles Fisher, Central Buyer, Beers, Spirits and Tobacco, Waitrose <i>Building on consumer's trust with a long-term successful strategy.</i></p>
	<p>Ian Harris, Chief Executive of the Wine & Spirit Education Trust. <i>The importance of education, understanding the key issues and creating responsible ambassadors for the industry globally</i></p>
	<p>The Forum will conclude with a discussion panel chaired by Dr Thomas Stuttford, Medical Correspondent to the Times Panel members will include speakers, and Richard Siddle - Harpers, Crispin Acton - Department of Health, Susan McCraith - MW Ethical Fine Wines</p>
2.30	<p>Conference Ends</p>

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Please post with your payment to: Alcohol in Moderation, PO Box 2282, Bath BA1 2QY, UK

Alcohol in Moderation was founded in 1991 as an independent organisation whose role is to communicate 'The Responsible Drinking Message'.

AIM publishes an online journal of peer-reviewed key research papers, articles on alcohol, health and associated social and policy issues.

AIM is funded by subscription to its journal and advisory services and works with a prestigious Council of eighteen leading Professors and Medical Specialists from around the world committed to promoting the responsible and moderate use of alcohol.

AIM MISSION STATEMENT

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

Please contact Sherry Webster for further information about AIM's role and for details of how you can subscribe to our information services and support our work.

Sherry.Webster@aim-digest.com Tel. +44 (0)1225 471444 Fax +44 (0)1225 427444

For copies of speeches or information following the conference, please contact **Alison Rees** on alison.rees@aim-digest.com or visit www.aim-digest.com

AIM works with a Social, Scientific and Medical Council to bring additional scientific perspectives to current alcohol research, media and public policy debates

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'Of Fat Mice and Men' By Harvey E. Finkel, M.D

The life-span extending effects of red wine's resveratrol are being followed up the evolutionary scale by David A. Sinclair's research group at Harvard Medical School, which, in late 2006, reported positive results in a mammal, the mouse.

Recall that prolongation of life had been demonstrated previously in resveratrol-treated yeast, roundworm, fruitfly, and fish. The latest study describes three groups of middle-aged mice. They neither smoked nor consumed alcohol. One group was fed a standard diet, and led a lifestyle normal for male laboratory C57BL/6NIA mice. Two groups of the same sort of mice were fed a high-calorie, high-fat diet, and both became obese. One of the groups of fat mice was also plied with large doses of resveratrol, the behaviour and performance, life span, numerous biochemical measurements, and organ pathology of the three groups of mice were compared.

Another study of the effects of resveratrol on mice, published in *Cell*, December, 2006, by a group led by Johan Auwerx, serves to affirm and amplify the Sinclair study. The Auwerx program used young male C57BL/6J and KKAY mice, with free access to food and water. Half received resveratrol in addition.

Results of the studies seem clear. Resveratrol is salutary, at least for mice. The obese mice treated with resveratrol remain as healthy as the lean mice. They live much longer and look younger than untreated fat mice, and are as active and agile as their lean cousins fed a standard

diet. Resveratrol increases energy-producing mitochondria, preserves insulin sensitivity, and reduces the damaging effects of obesity and the unhealthy diet on the tissues of the heart, blood vessels, and pancreas.

In the Auwerx study, resveratrol protects mice from obesity, diabetes, and aging. It stimulates energy efficiency, induces mitochondrial activity and tolerance to cold, and raises resistance to muscle fatigue.

Resveratrol is thought to work to extend life in the same way as severe calorie restriction--a reduction of 30 to 40 percent fewer than normal: not an easy sell. The physiological stress induced by calorie restriction, and, it is believed, compounds like resveratrol without such restriction, activate the sirtuin enzyme group, stimulating a complex of metabolic benefits. Resveratrol, whose richest source is grape skins (thus, red wine) is just the most potent in extending life span of a number of antioxidant polyphenols. White wine, dark beer, and cask-aged spirits contain some too, but in lesser quantity.

Resveratrol-induced sirtuin activation also causes a loss of body fat, which itself tends to extend life span.

A study performed at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology demonstrates that the increased life span in diet-restricted roundworms depends on signaling from central nerve cells to body tissues, likely by means of a hormone messenger.

There may be important implications here for human fitness, health, and longevity, and

for understanding of the French paradox. Athletes may be interested, though such use will engender controversy. Further research is being considered on rhesus monkeys, which are more similar to humans than are mice. Obesity increases the risks of cardiovascular disease and diabetes, which has its own ravages, and probably other age-related disorders, such as cancer and inflammation. It is hoped that, by stimulating energy-producing mitochondria in cells, the prevalence of neurodegenerative diseases, e.g., Alzheimer's and Huntington's diseases, might be reduced by resveratrol.

It is not time, however, to take all this to the bank. The first caveat, obviously, is the lack, so far, of evidence that these effects associated with resveratrol administration would also occur safely in humans. The evidence regarding lower doses seems conflicted. The dose of resveratrol given the mice is equivalent in humans to hundreds of glasses of wine daily. Both the Sinclair and Auwerx studies cited owe support to Sirtis Pharmaceutical, cofounded by Sinclair, a prospective commercial producer of a high-dose resveratrol pill, but wine is so much nicer than a pill.

And don't forget alcohol, the component of wine that is believed to provide more than half of its health benefits.

Harvey Finkel is a valued member of the AIM Social, Scientific and Medical Council.

Please see page 21 for references

Of Fat mice and Men - References

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Moderate wine consumption may help boost women's health

In a report from Spain, researchers at the University of Barcelona evaluated the effects of moderate consumption of red and white wine - 6.8 ounces, or two glasses a day - in 35 non-smoking Spanish women, average age 38.

Each woman drank the recommended "dose" of either white or red wine for four-week periods, with a four-week dry period separating each round of study.

"The data showed that, in comparison with the baseline period, consumption of both red and white wines increased serum [blood] HDL cholesterol, which suggests a cardio-protective effect," said the report.

"Similarly, serum concentrations of interleukin-6 and high-sensitivity C-reactive protein (both markers of chronic inflammation), decreased significantly after both wine ingestion periods".

Other markers of cardiac health

were affected "in a healthy way" by red wine a little more than by white wine, the researchers added. The study provides, "scientifically rigorous evidence" that moderate wine consumption helps keep the heart healthy by preventing low-grade inflammation in women, the Spanish team concluded.

Dr. R. Curtis Ellison, professor of medicine and public health at Boston University comments:

"This continues to add to many other studies by showing the mechanisms by which both red and white wine help prevent heart disease, when you give women a glass and a half of wine each day, you have considerable effects on improving inflammation, a little more for red wine than for white."

Source: Down-regulation of adhesion molecules and other inflammatory biomarkers after moderate wine consumption in healthy women: a randomized trial *Am. J. Clinical Nutrition*, Nov 2007; 86: 1463 - 1469.

Late nights and drinking combined impair driving

Researchers in a recent study examined how the combination of drinking and sleepiness influenced driving performance in 29 young adults.

Subjects stayed awake several hours after usual bedtime and consumed, over 30 minutes 1 hour before usual bedtime, vodka (0.54 g/kg for men; 0.49g (mixed with tonic)/kg for women) on one night and placebo on another. They completed driving simulation and visual reaction time tasks before and after consuming the alcohol or placebo. Analyses were adjusted for potential confounders (e.g., previous sleep history).

Performance on the driving simulation task significantly

deteriorated as the time awake increased.

Alcohol exacerbated the effects of wakefulness on certain driving simulation tasks, particularly at hour 15.5 of wakefulness (when alcohol levels peaked) but not at hour 18.5.

Reaction time also deteriorated with increasing time awake, but was not significantly affected by alcohol consumption (compared with placebo).

R Curtis Ellison comments:

Drinking on top of sleep deprivation decreased driving performance. But, drinking did not appear to exacerbate sleep deprivations effects

on reaction time. By 18.5 hours of wakefulness, the effects of sleepiness apparently superseded any alcohol effects. This study provides additional evidence that in sleep-deprived young people, the rapid consumption of even a moderate amount of alcohol may further impair driving. The potential effects of less-rapid consumption of alcohol or of eating food in conjunction with alcohol intake were not tested.

Source: Rupp TL, Acebo C, Seifer R, et al. Effects of a moderate evening alcohol dose. II: Performance. *Alcohol Clin Exp Res*. 2007;31(8):1365-1371.

Combined impact of health behaviours and mortality in men and women: The EPIC-Norfolk Prospective Population Study

The authors of this study state that there is overwhelming evidence that behavioural factors influence health, but their combined impact on the general population is less well documented. They aimed to quantify the potential combined impact of four health behaviours on mortality in men and women living in the general community.

The study examined the prospective relationship between lifestyle and mortality in a prospective population study of 20,244 men and women aged 45–79 years with no known cardiovascular disease or cancer at baseline survey in 1993–1997, living in the general community in the United Kingdom, and followed up to 2006.

Participants scored one point for each health behaviour: current non-smoking, not physically inactive, moderate alcohol intake (1–14 units a week) and plasma vitamin C >50 mmol/l indicating fruit and vegetable intake of at least five servings a day, for a total score ranging from zero to four.

After an average 11-year follow up, the age-, sex-, body mass-, and social class-adjusted relative risks (95% confidence intervals) for all-cause mortality (1,987 deaths) for men and women who had three, two, one, and zero compared to four

health behaviours were respectively, 1.39 (1.21–1.60), 1.95 (1.70–2.25), 2.52 (2.13–3.00), and 4.04 (2.95–5.54) $p < 0.001$ trend. The relationships were consistent in subgroups stratified by sex, age, body mass index, and social class, and after excluding deaths within 2 years. The trends were strongest for cardiovascular causes. The mortality risk for those with four compared to zero health behaviours was equivalent to being 14 years younger in chronological age.

The authors conclude that four health behaviours combined predict a 4-fold difference in total mortality in men and women, with an estimated impact equivalent to 14 years in chronological age.

Curtis Ellison comments: For a number of years we have strongly supported the “Healthy Lifestyle” that has been shown by a number of investigators from Harvard to be associated with much lower risk of cardiovascular disease and total mortality. The Harvard index includes (1) not smoking, (2) not being obese, (3) a healthy diet (similar to a Mediterranean Diet), (4) regular physical activity, and (5) moderate alcohol intake. A recent analysis by Mukamal et al. (1) showed that moderate alcohol intake was a key component of this

lifestyle in terms of lower risk of cardiovascular disease.

The present study has used an even simpler definition of a healthy lifestyle and found very similar health outcomes in a prospective population study in the UK. Those in the study who were (1) non smokers, (2) active, (3) had a vitamin C level suggesting high intake of fruits and vegetables, and (4) consumed some but no more than 14 typical drinks/week, had about one-fourth the risk of dying over the follow-up period as those who had none of the healthy behaviors. (In the UK, a typical drink is considered to be 8 grams of alcohol, so the equivalent in US typical drinks would be about 9 drinks/week, with 12 grams of alcohol in a drink.)

The study supports an increasing number of previous research reports suggesting that all of these behaviours have a favourable outcome on health, and the total impact among people having all of the behaviours can be a marked reduction in risk of death.

Source: Khaw K-T, Wareham N, Bingham S, Welch A, Luben R, Da N. Combined impact of health behaviours and mortality in men and women: The EPIC-Norfolk Prospective Population Study. www.plosmedicine.org 0002 January 2008;5:e12.

Interactions of wine drinking with omega-3 fatty acids in patients with coronary heart disease: A fish-like effect of moderate wine drinking

Moderate alcohol drinking and marine omega-3 fatty acids ($\Omega 3$) have both been associated with low mortality from coronary heart disease (CHD). However, there is little data evaluating the interactions of wine ethanol drinking with $\Omega 3$ in CHD patients.

The relationships between wine drinking and marine $\Omega 3$ were evaluated in a cross-sectional study in patients with CHD participating in a randomized trial testing the effect of a high linolenic acid (ALA, the main plant $\Omega 3$) diet. Daily ethanol intake was calculated as energy and expressed as a percentage of total energy. Plant and marine $\Omega 3$ in the

diet were carefully evaluated in each patient in both groups.

Patients were classified according to their habitual consumption of ethanol. Patients in the 'high ALA group' and controls ('low ALA group') were analyzed separately. Within each group, there was a progressive increase in marine $\Omega 3$ levels with increased alcohol intake, with a level of eicosapentanoic acid (EPA) that increased by 50% ($P < .005$) and 37% ($P < .05$) in the low and high ALA groups, respectively. After controlling for potential confounders (including dietary EPA) in a multivariate linear model, the association between

wine ethanol and EPA remained significant in the low ($P < .001$) and high ($P < .05$) ALA groups.

In these patients with CHD, moderate wine drinking was associated with higher marine $\Omega 3$ concentrations than no alcohol use. Although the data have to be confirmed in large groups, this effect of wine comparable to that of fish may partly explain the protective effects of wine drinking against CHD.

Source: Am Heart J. 2008 Jan;155(1):175-181 18082510 Interactions of wine drinking with omega-3 fatty acids in patients with coronary heart disease: A fish-like effect of moderate wine drinking.

Little evidence that occasional binge drinking while pregnant seriously harms fetus

A new study has found that there is little substantive evidence that binge drinking while pregnant seriously harms the developing fetus.

Consistently heavy drinking throughout pregnancy has been associated with birth defects and subsequent neurological problems, but it is not known what impact binge drinking, in the absence of regular heavy drinking, might have. The study's findings are based on a comprehensive review of published research on binge drinking and women who were either pregnant or trying to conceive.

Binge drinking was taken to mean consuming five or more alcoholic drinks in one go, equivalent to 60g of alcohol or 7.5 units.

The period under review spanned 35 years from 1970 to 2005, and reviewed more than 3500 articles,

which were narrowed down to 14 pieces of relevant research.

The results indicated that there was little substantive evidence that binge drinking caused a range of problems, including miscarriage, stillbirth, abnormal birthweight or birth defects, such as fetal alcohol syndrome. But there was some suggestion that it might impair normal neurodevelopment, although the effects were generally quite small, say the authors. These included disinhibited behaviour, reduced verbal IQ, an increased tendency towards delinquent behaviour, learning problems and poorer academic performance.

They point out that the timing of binge drinking might be important. There may be more impact during the first 13 weeks of pregnancy, for example.

This systematic review found no convincing evidence of adverse effects of prenatal binge drinking, except possibly on neurodevelopmental outcomes.

The authors suggest that further research is required, but suggest continuing to advise women to avoid binge drinking during pregnancy. But add 'When pregnant women report isolated episodes of binge drinking in the absence of a consistently high daily alcohol intake, as is often the case, it is important to avoid inducing unnecessary anxiety, as, at present, the evidence of risk seems minimal'.

Source: Systematic review of the fetal effects of prenatal binge-drinking Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health 2007;61:1069-1073;doi:10.1136/jech.2006.054213

Drinking alcohol may keep leg arteries healthy

Moderate alcohol consumption may protect against leg artery disease in the elderly, a condition in which the arteries in the legs become narrowed or clogged with fatty deposits, reducing blood flow to the legs.

Researchers found that elderly men and women who reported drinking from one to 13 servings of beer, wine, or spirits a week had a 44% lower risk of being hospitalized for leg artery disease, compared with elderly men and women who reported no alcohol consumption.

“These results are consistent with the long-standing observation that moderate drinkers have a lower risk of heart attack, which is also caused by blockages in arteries,” commented Dr. Kenneth J. Mukamal, of Beth

Israel Deaconess Medical Center, Brookline, Massachusetts.

Over time, a build-up of plaque and a hardening of the arteries may impact circulation in the legs, ankles, and feet and cause lower-extremity artery disease. Symptoms of this condition include burning, aching, pain, and coolness in the legs, as well as changes in skin color or the development of slow or non-healing sores on the legs or feet.

Mukamal’s team identified a lower risk for hospitalization for lower extremity artery disease over 7.5 years on average among self-reported moderate alcohol drinkers. The study population included 5,635 generally healthy, community-dwelling adults who participated in the Cardiovascular Health Study.

By contrast, this apparent protective effect was not evident among study participants reporting less than one, or 14 or more, alcoholic drinks a week, the researchers report.

Moderate alcohol consumption was furthermore associated with a trend for declining arterial pressure in the lower legs, another indicator of lower risk for arterial disease.

These findings, taken together with previous research, suggest potential cardiovascular benefits from moderate alcohol consumption.

“However, alcohol also has a wide variety of other effects, especially in older adults who are apt to be taking a variety of medications,” Mukamal cautions, “so older adults should discuss their alcohol use with their doctors at least yearly.”

Source: American Journal of Epidemiology, January 2008

Alcohol and long-term prognosis after a first acute myocardial infarction: the SHEEP study

Few studies have investigated the relation between alcohol consumption, former drinking, and prognosis after an acute myocardial infarction (AMI), particularly for non-fatal outcomes.

The SHEEP study investigated the prognostic importance of drinking habits among patients surviving a first AMI.

A total of 1346 consecutive patients between 45–70 years with a first non-fatal AMI underwent a standardized clinical examination and were followed for over 8 years.

The study recorded total and cardiac mortality and hospitalization for non-fatal cardiovascular disease in relation to individual alcoholic

beverage consumption at the time of AMI and 5 years before inclusion, assessed by a standardized questionnaire administered during hospitalization.

267 deaths, and 145 deaths from cardiac causes were recorded during the follow-up period. After adjustment for several potential confounders, hazard ratios for total and cardiac mortality were 0.77 (0.51–1.15) and 0.61 (0.36–1.02) for those drinking >0–<5 g per day, 0.77 (0.50–1.18) and 0.62 (0.36–1.07) for those drinking 5–20 g per day, and 0.89 (0.56–1.40) and 0.69 (0.38–1.25) for those drinking over 20 g per day. Risk of hospitalization for recurrent non-fatal AMI, stroke, or heart failure generally

showed a similar pattern to that of total and cardiac mortality. Recent quitters at the time of AMI had a hazard ratio of 4.55 (2.03–10.20) for total mortality. Measures of insulin sensitivity appeared to be the strongest mediators of this association.

The researchers conclude that moderate alcohol drinking might have beneficial effects on several aspects of long-term prognosis after an AMI. The findings also highlight that former drinkers should be examined separately from long-term abstainers. The potential mechanisms that underlie this association still need to be elucidated.

Source: American Heart Journal Volume 155, Issue 1, Pages 175-181 (January 2008)

Moderate drinking and diabetes risk

Reflecting the findings of many other studies that moderate alcohol use reduces blood sugar levels in sufferers of type 2 diabetes, Dr. Iris Shai of Ben Gurion University of the Negev in Beer-Sheva and colleagues randomized 109 adults with type 2 diabetes who had previously abstained from alcohol to have 150 ml of wine (13g alcohol) or a nonalcoholic diet beer (control) daily with dinner for 3 months.

A total of 91 patients completed the trial. The age range of the study subjects was 41 to 74 years.

Average fasting blood sugar levels were 139.6 mg/dL at the outset in the intervention group, and it fell

to 118.0 mg/dL after 3 months with alcohol consumption. Starting fasting blood sugar levels were 136.7 in controls, and remained essentially unchanged 3 months later at 138.6 mg/dl.

Patients with higher starting hemoglobin A1C levels - a measurement of blood sugar - had greater reductions in fasting blood sugar with alcohol consumption than those with lower A1C levels.

Alcohol consumption had no effect on post-meal blood sugar levels. It was important that the subjects drank alcohol with their evening meal, which contained carbohydrates, Shai commented.

Summing up, Shai said this study “might suggest that moderate alcohol consumption could be considered as prescription for patients with type 2 diabetes in very specifically eligible groups” but added a caveat. “A patient who drinks one glass of wine a day should balance the extra calories by omitting 100 kcal that come from a carbohydrate source ... It is important to note that higher doses of alcohol are dangerous and each patient should talk with his physician before initiation.”

Source: Diabetes Care, December 2007.

How heavy alcohol use can cause hypoglycemia in diabetics

Scientists at the leading Swedish medical university Karolinska Institutet have researched how heavy alcohol use may cause exaggerated insulin secretion resulting in severe hypoglycemia. This mechanism, explains how alcohol ingestion may harm the human brain by decreasing the blood glucose concentration to inappropriately low levels.

Hypoglycemia induced by alcohol ingestion is a well known clinical problem in diabetic patients. However, the mechanisms underlying this phenomenon have largely remained elusive. Since insulin secretion can be rapidly

tuned by changes in pancreatic microcirculation, scientists at the Stockholm South Hospital Diabetes Research Center, Karolinska Institutet, evaluated the influence of alcohol administration on pancreatic islet blood flow and dynamic changes in insulin secretion and blood sugar levels.

The researchers found that alcohol exerts substantial influences on pancreatic microcirculation by evoking a massive redistribution of pancreatic blood flow from the exocrine into the endocrine (insulin-producing) part via mechanisms mediated by the

messenger molecule nitric oxide and the vagus nerve, augmenting late phase insulin secretion, and thereby evoking hypoglycemia.

According to Professor Sjöholm the discovery is very important. This novel mechanism may in part underlie the well known hypoglycemic properties of alcohol in diabetic patients or in alcoholics with hepatic failure.

Source: Zhen Huang, and Åke Sjöholm. “Ethanol acutely stimulates islet blood flow, amplifies insulin secretion, and induces hypoglycemia via NO and vagally mediated mechanisms” *Endocrinology* (2008); 149: 232-236.

Wine waste shows promise for dental health

Early results of a collaboration to investigate the impact of compounds from grapes could relate to oral bacteria indicate a role for polyphenols in preventing caries. The first results of a collaboration between researchers from the University of Rochester Medical Center and the New York, which was funded by the USDA, have been published in the *Journal of Agriculture and Food Chemistry* December 07.

The researchers investigated the make-up of polyphenols from different wine grape varieties, and how these interfere with *Streptococcus mutans*, (the bacteria that produces substances behind tooth decay), acid, and glucans (the building blocks of plaque).

The team was most interested in examining the impact of grape polyphenols on two capabilities of *S. mutans* that enable it to thrive in the human mouth. First, it secretes enzymes known as glucosyltransferases (GTFs) that produce sugary, glue-like substances (glucans) that firmly attach bacteria to tooth surfaces and form a tough barrier around bacterial colonies. Such barriers, called the extracellular polysaccharide (EPS) matrix, protect the colony against environmental assaults, and make them, in some cases, hundreds of times more resistant to antibiotics. These bacteria are known as biofilms, whether they occur on teeth or elsewhere in the body. Many *Streptococci* (strep) and *Staphylococci* (staph) cause resistant forms of meningitis, pneumonia, staph aureus, as well

as infections on heart valves and around stents, by forming biofilms. GTFs are a main virulence factor responsible for *S. mutans* biofilm formation, but other pathogens use similar mechanisms to produce EPS matrix. The hope is that learning about one will suggest ways to interfere with many.

A second linked set of virulence factors for *S. mutans* are its abilities to secrete acid, and to survive in that acid. Having evolved to be "acid durable," *S. mutans* can survive and out-compete other bacteria in the mouth. Better understanding of these mechanisms could also yield new ways to fight other biofilm related infections.

In the current study, researchers found that all polyphenol extracts inhibited two bacterial GTFs by as much as 85% ($P < 0.01$), a level of inhibition not previously observed in Koo's lab. Cabernet Franc extracts were more effective GTF inhibitors, with Pinot noir a close second at concentrations that might be useful therapeutically. Grape polyphenols were also found to cause *S. mutans* to produce significantly less acid. This may be because they inhibit glycolysis, the process by which the bacteria turns sugar into energy also produces acid, researchers said. None of the extracts from any variety killed the bacteria outright. By targeting the ability of *S. mutans* to form EPS matrix, for example, therapeutic approaches to reducing the formation of biofilms could be precise and selective. Further chemical analysis will be needed to pinpoint which the most effective polyphenol mix.

Hyun Koo, lead researcher stated that the aim is to isolate the key compounds in winemaking waste (such as quercetin and resveratrol) that disarm the bacteria, and to use these in consumer products, such as mouth rinse and the development of drugs to support oral health.

Source: *Journal of Agriculture and Food Chemistry* 2007 Dec 12;55(25):10200-7.
Title: "Chemical characterization of red wine grape (*Vitis vinifera* and *Vitis interspecific hybrids*) and pomace phenolic extracts and their biological activity against *Streptococcus mutans*".



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No need for reduced alcohol consumption in later life

Provided they adhere to the same guidelines on alcohol consumption as younger adults, regular moderate drinking poses no additional risks to the over 65s, and may bring health benefits, according to two studies from the Peninsula Medical School in the South West of England.

Researchers assessed the drinking levels of over 13,000 older people in England and the US and looked at the effects on physical disability, mortality, cognitive function, depression, and well-being. They concluded that moderate drinking is fine for the over 65s - and in some cases is better than not drinking at all.

Dr. Iain Lang, lead author of the two studies from the Peninsula Medical School commented "What we are saying is that current guidelines on drinking for the elderly are too conservative, and that a couple of drinks a day will do no harm, and will in fact have a more beneficial affect on cognitive and general health than abstinence."

The research showed that those drinking on average more than one to two drinks a day achieved similar health results as those drinking on average more than zero to one drink a day. The worst results were in those who did not drink at all and in those who were heavy drinkers.

The shape of the relationship between alcohol consumption and the risk of disability were similar in men and women. Dr. Lang concluded: "The upshot of this research is that 'a little of what you fancy does you good.' Previous research has shown that middle-aged people can benefit from moderate drinking. These findings show the same applies to the over-65s."

For more information please visit <http://www.pms.ac.uk/pms/news.php?article=212>.

Study finds both drinking and exercise healthy

Danish researchers report that people who neither drink nor exercise have a 30 - 49% higher risk of heart disease than people who do one or both of the activities.

"The main finding is there seems to be an additional beneficial effect of drinking one to two drinks per day and doing at least moderate physical activity," commented Morten Gronbaek of the University of Southern Denmark, who led the study.

Many major studies have found that light to moderate drinking is associated with a lower risk of heart disease, and some studies have also found this leads to a lower risk

of some cancers. But the Danish study, one of the largest of its kind to examine the combined effect of drinking and exercise, found there were additional protective effects gained from doing both.

The researchers collected information on the drinking and exercise habits of nearly 12,000 men and women aged 20 years or older between 1981 and 1983. Over the next 20 years, some 1,200 of the participants died from heart disease and about 5,900 died from other causes.

Non-drinkers had a 30 - 31% higher risk of heart disease compared to

moderate drinkers, no matter the amount of physical activity they undertook. Moderate consumption was defined as between 1 to 14 drinks per week. But teetotallers who exercised at least moderately were able to reduce their risk of heart disease, an important finding for people who abstain because of religious beliefs or other health issues such as pregnancy, the researchers said.

People who had the lowest risk of dying from any cause were physically active, moderate drinkers while those at highest risk were the physically inactive, heavy drinkers, the study found.

Source: Jan 9, 2008, European Heart Journal

'Responsible Drinking - What more must the trade do to satisfy its critics' - Off Licence News Seminar report



On the 22nd November, Off Licence News held its responsible drinking seminar, entitled 'Responsible Drinking - what more must the trade do to satisfy its critics?'

Presenters included:

Jean Collingwood, Chief Executive of the Drink AWARE Trust

Ms Collingwood outlined the role of the Trust as a source of 'impartial advice' on sensible drinking. The Trust had reached an estimated 3 million people with sensible drinking messages through its website (1 million estimated users) and links via packaging and advertising. The Trust has granted £500,000 via 48 grants to sensible drinking campaigns and projects in different regions and has reached 2,400 schools with the Streetwise project, developed by Diageo and Edcoms while funds were directed through the Portman Group.

Collingwood wants 'a conversation with the nation' on drinking and is hoping that the new under eighteens website www.thetruthaboutbooze.com with a blog and based on the successful design of Youtube and Facebook, will help facilitate that dialogue. Communications will

be based on facts and impartial information and the Trust will champion transparency and independence of material and research.

Drink AWARE also funded a record and concert in aid of CRISIS in December to raise awareness of alcohol in the plight of homeless people.

Brandon Cook, Trading Standards Institute - Lead Officer for Age Related Sales

Mr Cook reported on the change of emphasis on the part of the Trading Standards Institute (TSI), from blanket under age test purchasing, to covert monitoring of problem premises or of those suspected of supplying alcohol to the underage. This is in the wake of successful reductions in underage sales of all categories (on and off trade) through programmes such as 'Challenge 21', Pub Watch and PASS card initiatives which has led to 99% of customers using premises responsibly. The trade was also pleased to hear that there would be more ramifications for the attempted purchase who now will have a fixed penalty issued, will be taken home and the officers will see parents and the alcohol purchased confiscated. Mr Cook understands that the root problem is the desire of underage drinkers to purchase and consume alcohol and he would welcome efforts through education and improved services and leisure for young people to deliver the culture change needed to reduce this desire. Another problem TSI

encounter is that of proxy purchase or condonement of behaviour by parents. Many problems are at community level and there is no short term fix. Mr Cook would like to see more sensible drinking literature at point of purchase and through retailers with more rewards for premises offering advice and guidance. Cook also asked for all retailers to accept PASS accredited cards so that young consumers did not have to carry passports if they do not have a drivers licence.

Dr Gillian Hopkins, Lancaster University management school

Dr Hopkins reported on research carried out with the Retail of Alcohol Standards Group on cashiers attitudes on having to ask for proof of age and facing failure of test purchase. Participants who had failed to identify an underage purchase felt that in some way they had been tricked and that it was not their fault that the person looked over eighteen. Cashiers universally found their work sociable and believed they were part of the community and they accept their policing role. They understand that 'kids will be kids' and will try and get away with underage purchases and accept their role as protecting the young from their own actions 'If they get drunk and have an accident, and I'd sold the alcohol, I'm 100% to blame.'

Cashiers also believe they are good at judging age. The aim of the research was to remove the personal judgement and to make

it automatic to ask for proof of age and to change perceptions among the young that identity will automatically be asked for - the rule rather than the exception. Their research found that cashiers still found it awkward to ask, but were finding it less embarrassing with time - especially if the 'its the store's policy not me' and a sense of humour was used. There was fear of being prosecuted for one slip up and suspicion that test purchasers were unfairly old looking and made up (this was denied by Mr Cook!).

Stephen Baker, a retired police inspector after 30 years service PUBwatch

Stephen Baker spoke of the scheme PUBwatch, which has been operating for 10 years and has 500 local schemes. The essence of the scheme is that premises in a town or locality liaise and confer to mutually ban trouble makers or those obviously drunk. The 'Banned from one, banned from all' policy giving a message that antisocial or abusive behaviour will not be tolerated. The scheme is deemed as extremely effective and cost efficient and works well in partnership with the Best Bar None scheme.

Simon Kaye, Regent Inns

Simon Kaye truly addressed the title theme of the conference 'of what more can we do?'

Regent Inns are owners of large premises such as Old Orleans, Walk about and Jongleurs comedy clubs - their business is controversial as it is largely post 10pm and their venues are 500 to 1000 capacity they are dealing with noise, size and a young audience and are constantly in the eye of the enforcers.

Kaye accepts the need to embrace programmes to police the environment and be welcomed by the community, contributing to the vibrancy and economy of city centres, as such they have enjoyed 100% pass rate with the proof of age tests (AMEC) and have won Best Bar None, City Safe and Smirnoff Shine Awards for their responsible venues.

For Kaye, responsible retailing is a commercial imperative - with real powers of closure and licence reviews by local authorities and the police if they fail and due to the Groups size, city centre locations and business they are always in the spotlight. For their customers too, they want a reputation where all can enjoy 'a great night out' without anti social behaviour or unpleasantness from a minority.

The company work with all partners - such as City Safe, Best Bar None, Pub Watch and Challenge 21 to ensure their compliance and invest in staff training and their own test purchase trials. They have a four strain policy to ensure their licensing objectives. They are: Crime and disorder; public safety; prevention of nuisance and protection of children. The policies are embedded in to business practice and training. They hold an incidence database for their premises, logging the number of door refusals and purchase refusals. If a premises has had a police incident or noise complaint, it is discussed and resolved at board level.

Kaye believes they cannot do more and believes a lack of joined up thinking at Government level presents obstacles. The unsupervised sale of alcohol is dealt with by three departments, harmful effects

by health, antisocial behaviour by the home office and the OFT dealing with competition issues. Kaye estimates the Group has to deal with 49 different initiatives interpreted in different ways by local authorities resulting in 2,500 different ways in which they have to react. Kaye believes it is time that credit is given for the enormous steps the main players in the on trade have taken and the number of initiatives and partnerships they actively and willingly work with.

Kaye has a problem with pre loading issues, where customers are often over the limit before they come out - the large price differential in off and on trade prices are partially responsible for this - customers are coming out 1 1/4 hours later than two years ago.

Mark Hastings of the Beer and Pub Association

Hastings praised the involvement of the brewers and on trade in initiatives, and commented that the improvement in drinking behaviour in the UK is a reflection of this work. He outlined the issues the beer and pub trade are facing with 14 million less pints a day being consumed now against 1979. In the on trade, there have been over 1 million refusals of customers due to underage or inebriation in the last year. Statistics reported in AIM in October and November showed a decline in binge drinking, a decline in underage drinking and purchase. Hastings also emphasised that UK levels of 'binge drinking' are still high, yet taxes are some of the highest in Europe, indicating that price is an independent issue to cultural patterns of drinking.

ORGANISATIONS

UNITED KINGDOM

Alcohol Concern

First Floor 8 Shelton Street, London WC2 9JR
Tel: (0207) 395 4000 Fax: (0207) 395 4005
website www.alcoholconcern.org.uk

Alcohol Education And Research Council

Abell House, John Islip Street, London SW1P 4LH
Tel: (0207) 217 5276

The Medical Council on Alcohol

3 St. Andrew's Place, London, NW1 4LB
Tel: (0207) 487 4445 Fax: (0207) 9354479

The Portman Group

7-10 Chandos Street, Cavendish Square,
London W1G 9DQ
Tel: 020 7907 3700 Fax: 020 7907 3710
email: Info@portmangroup.org.uk
website: www.portman-group.org.uk

The Drinkaware Trust

7-10 Chandos Street, Cavendish Square,
London W1G 9DQ
Tel: 020 7307 7450 Fax: 0207 307 7460
email: info@drinkawaretrust.org.uk
website: www.drinkawaretrust.org.uk
www.drinkaware.co.uk

Alcohol Focus Scotland

2nd Floor 166 Buchanan Street, Glasgow G1 2NH
Tel: 0141-572 6700 Fax: 041-333 1606
website: www.alcohol-focus-scotland.org.uk

BBPA British Beer and Pub Association

Market Towers, 1, Nine Elms Lane, London, SW8
5NQ Tel: 020 7627 9191 Fax: 020 7627 9123
email: jwitheridge@beerandpub.com
website: www.beerandpub.com

Wine & Spirit Education Trust

International Wine & Spirit Centre
39-45 Bermondsey Street
London SE1 3XF
Telephone: 020 7089 3800 Fax: 020 7089 3845
Email: wset@wset.co.uk

The Wine and Spirit Trade Association

International Wine & Spirit Centre
39 - 45 Bermondsey Street
London SE1 3XF
tel: +44 (0)20 7089 3877 fax: +44 (0)20 7089 3870
Email: info@wsta.co.uk

EUROPE

Brewers of Europe

Rue Caroly 23-25, B-1060 Bruxelles Tel: (+32.2) 672
23 92 Fax: (+32.2) 660 94 02
email: info@brewersofEurope.org
website: www.brewersofEurope.org

Forum of Taste and Education

Livornostraat 13 b 5 rue de Livourne – Brussel 1050
Bruxelles, Belgium
Tel: 32 2 539 36 64 Fax: 32 2 537 81 56
email: forum.taste.education@skynet.be

Enterprise et Prevention

13, Rue Monsigny, 75002 Paris, France
Tel: 00-33-53-43-80-75
email: enterprise@wanadoo.fr
website: www.soifdevivre.com

IREB

19, avenue Trudaine, 75009 Paris
Tel: +33 (1) 48 74 82 19 Fax: +33 (1) 48 78 17 56
email: ireb@ireb.com website: www.ireb.com

OIV

18 rue d'Aguesseau, 75008 Paris, France
Tel: +33 (0) 1 44 94 80 94 Fax: +33 (0) 1 42 66 90 63
email: oiv@oiv.int website: www.oiv.int

STIVA

Benoordenhoutseweg 22-23, NL-2596 BA,
The Hague, The Netherlands
Tel: +31 (0)70 314 2480 Fax: +31(0) 70 314 2481
email: info@STIVA.nl
website: www.stiva.nl

Fundacion Alcohol Y Sociedad

Villalar, 4 1º izq. 28001 Madrid
Tel: + 34 91 745 08 44 Fax: + 34 91 561 8955
email: secretaria@alcoholysociedad.org
website: www.alcoholysociedad.org

Scandinavian Medical Alcohol Board

Vandværksvej 11 DK - 5690 Tommerup
Tel: 45 64 75 22 84 Fax: 45 64 75 28 44
email: smab@org
website: www.smab.org

Deutsche Wein Akademie GMBH

Gutenbergplatz 3-5, 55116 Mainz
Tel: 49-2641-9065801 (home office)
49-6131-282948 (head office) Fax: 49-2641-9065802
email: fradera@deutscheweinakademie.de
website: www.deutscheweinakademie.de

FIVIN

Plaza Penedés, 3, 3,08720 Vilafranca del Penedés,
Barcelona, Spain
Tel: 0034 (93) 890 45 45
Fax: 0034 (93) 890 46 11

GODA

Gode Alkoholdninger, Kattesundet 9, DK-1458
København K, Denmark Tel: 33 13 93 83
Fax: 33 13 03 84 email: info@goda.dk
website: www.goda.dk

FIVS International Federation of Wines & Spirits

18, rue d'Aguesseau, F-75008 - PARIS France
Tél. 33 01 42 68 82 48 Fax 33 01 40 06 06 98
email : fivs.ass@wanadoo.fr
website: www.fivs.org

EFRD The European Forum for Responsible Drinking

Place Stéphanie, 6, B -1050 Bruxelles
T: + 32.2.505.60.72
F: + 32.2.502.69.71
website: www.efrd.org

MEAS Limited

Merrion House
1/3 Fitzwilliam Street Lower
Dublin 2, Ireland
Tel: 00 353 1 611 4811 Fax: 00 353 1 611 4808
website: www.meas.ie
www.drinkaware.ie

The European Federation Of Wine & Spirit Importers

And Distributors (EFWSID)
Five Kings House
1 Queen Street Place
London EC4R 1XX
Tel +44 (0) 20 7248 5377 Fax +44(0) 20 7489 0322
email: EFWSID@wsa.org.uk

USA, CANADA, SOUTH AMERICA, AUSTRALIA

American Council On Science And Health

1995 Broadway, 2nd Floor, New York, NY 10023-5860
Tel: (212) 362-7044 Ext. 234 Fax: (212) 362-4919
email: kava@acsh.org website: www.acsh.org

Beer Institute

122 C Street, NW #750,
Washington DC 20001
Tel:(202) 737-2337 Fax: (202) 737-7004
email:info@beerinstitute.org
website: www.beerinstitute.org

Distilled Spirits Council Of The US

1250 Eye Street, NW, Suite 400,
Washington DC 20005
Tel:(202) 628-3544 website: www.discus.org

Proyecto Ciencia Vino Y Salud

Facultad de ciencias Biológicas,
Casilla 114 D. Santiago, Chile
Tel:/Fax: (56-23) 222 2577
email: vinsalud@genes.bio.puc.cl

Éduc' Alcoool

606, Cathcart, Suite 700, Montréal, Québec, H3B 1K9
Canada Tel: (514) 875-7454
email: hsacy@educalcoool.qc.ca
website: www.educalcoool.qc.ca

FISAC

(Fundacion de Investigaciones Sociales A.C.) Francisco
Sosa 230. Coyoacan CP 04000 Mexico DF - Mexico
Tel:+52.5552 2194
Fax: +52 5554 0161
email: iybarra@fisac.org.mx
website:www.alcoholinformate.org.mx

The Wine Institute

425 Market Street, Suite 1000, San Francisco, CA
94105, USA Tel: (415) 512-0151 Fax: (415) 442-0742

Traffic Injury Research Foundation.

Suite 200, 171 Nepean Street, Ottawa, Ontario,
Canada, K2P 0B4 Tel: 613-238-5235
email: barbarak@trafficingjuryresearch.com
website:www.trafficingjuryresearch.com

ICAP

International Center for Alcohol Policies
1519 New Hampshire Avenue, NW
Washington DC 20036
Tel: (202) 986-1159 Fax: (202) 986-2080
website: www.icap.org

The Century Council

1310 G Street, NW, Suite 600,
Washington, DC 20005-3000
Tel: (202) 637-0077 Fax: (202) 637-0079
email: washde@centurycouncil.org
website: www.centurycouncil.org

California Association Of Winegrape Growers

601 University Avenue, Suite 135 Sacramento, CA
95825 email: karen@kawg.org
website: www.kawg.org

Lodi-Woodridge Winegrape Commission

2545 West Turner Road Lodi, CA 95242 USA
email:mark@lodiwine.com
website: www.lodiwine.com

Oldways Preservation & Exchange Trust

266 Beacon Street Boston, MA 02116 617.421.5500
Fax: 617.421.5511 website: www.oldwayspt.org

The Australian Wine Research Institute

PO Box 197, glen Osmond 5064, South Australia,
Australia. Tel: 61 8 8303 6600 Fax: 61 6 303 6601
website: www.awri.com.au