



EUPHA Snapshot 2012-1 The impact of Alcohol

Abstracts on **Impact of Alcohol** presented at our conferences:

1999 9 abstracts	2000 9 abstracts	2001 5 abstracts	2002 9 abstracts	2003 1 abstracts	2004 4 abstracts	2005 11 abstracts	2006 13 abstracts	2007 27 abstracts	2008 22 abstracts	2009 9 abstracts	2010 23 abstracts
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Factors influencing alcohol dependence and injury in Europe:

- Socio-economic status
- Male gender
- Adolescents and college students
- Peers' influence
- Parents' influence
- Smoke or illegal drugs use
- Educational level
- Social skills and competence
- Divorced and single status
- Depression
- Alcohol availability
- Price

NO TIME TO LOSE

Alcohol consumption in the European Union totalled 56 billion litres in 2007, with strong variations across countries. Alcohol consumption has not decreased over the years and more effective programmes remain necessary.

Alcohol consumption has been regarded as an important contributor to the high premature mortality rates, particularly in Central and Eastern part of Europe (2009).

Adolescents and university students seem to be the highest risk group.

DEVELOPING A RISKY HABIT

Recent studies have shown that the earlier the onset of alcohol use, the higher the risk of developing alcohol-dependence in adulthood and higher consumption levels.

The influence of media, peers and parents is considered to be substantial in adolescents' drinking and binge drinking.

Furthermore, **alcohol use among students of tertiary education is on the rise worldwide** regarding the prevalence, the incidence of drinking sessions and binge drinking, and closing of the gender gap in alcohol use, abuse and dependence.

For example, in a sample of 265 Amsterdam students (2010) 96% uses alcohol.

Alcohol and Health

Abuse of alcohol involves a wide variety of adverse health consequences:

- Traffic-related injuries
- Injuries during sports and work activities
- Interpersonal violence
- Cardiovascular diseases
- Liver cirrhosis
- Cancers (colon, head and neck)
- Psychiatric disorders
- Insulin-resistance

- **Bans and restrictions** are effective in preventing tobacco and alcohol use.
- **School-based programmes** based on the comprehensive social influence approach, and **family programmes** for selected populations appear to be effective. Knowledge-based school programmes and **employment skills programmes** are not effective for behavioral change.
- There is still little evidence on the effects of **prevention campaigns and programmes at community level**.
- Intervention studies conducted in European adolescents aimed at the prevention of alcohol consumption showed **stronger effects in lower as compared with higher socioeconomic groups**.

COUNTRY EXPERIENCES

Alcohol and Drug use

In 2006, a study among **university and college students in Antwerp, Belgium** showed that over 70% of all students engaged in binge drinking in the past year; 17% even weekly. Binge drinking (at least six glasses on one occasion) shows a strong relationship with problematic alcohol and polydrug use.

Alcohol and Social context

Data from 1641 adolescents participating in prospective cohort study in **The Netherlands** showed that alcohol use in early adolescence increased the probability of problematic alcohol use during late adolescence (OR 3.18). Also **parental divorce** (OR 1.46), **low socio-economic status** (OR 1.51) and **father and mother alcohol use** (OR 1.15 and OR 1.21] **increased this likelihood significantly**.

Alcohol and Drive

On 2009 a **European** study, TEN D by Night, enrolled young drivers in recreational sites during weekend nights. Study results show a direct relationship between the **increase of reaction time** in a driving simulation and excessive alcohol consumption (greater than 0.5 g/L). Furthermore, the direct experience of alcohol effects on driving performance positively influenced young people behaviors.

Alcohol and Mortality

On 2007, a study conducted in **Poland** showed that in Central and Eastern part of European union (CEE) **alcohol was responsible for 38% of all deaths from injuries** in the male population aged 20–64. In the Baltic States this proportion reached 48% while in the EU-15 the level was 29%. **In the female population this proportion was 29%** for CEE countries, 42% in the Baltic States and 19% in EU15.

NGOs call for a comprehensive Alcohol Policy strategy in the European Union 2013-2020

Eurocare (www.eurocare.org), together with 87 other NGOs including EUPHA signed the call for a new comprehensive Alcohol Policy Strategy in the European Union for 2013-2010. The signatories would like to call on the Ministries of Health in Europe to acknowledge the need for a comprehensive alcohol policy framework. The Committee on National Alcohol Policy and Action met on 17 November 2011 and the NGOs urged them to put forward a request to the European Commission for a future European Alcohol Strategy for 2013-2020.