

Corporate Social Leadership

The Autumn has seen an important round of conferences in Europe, with social responsibility and a pro-active industry as a central theme. Hot on the footsteps of the Amsterdam Group (TAG) conference reported in the September/October edition of AIM, the World Advertising and Research Centre and ADMAP hosted the 8th Alcoholic Drinks Conference which focused on Social Leadership within the Social Responsibility Debate.

The essence of the conference was to see corporate social leadership as a marketing opportunity and key to company policy throughout all departments rather than being periphery to business. A quote from Pricewaterhouse Coopers summarised the position well 'A company's most important asset is its reputation'. A study by Heineken presented at the AIM/WSA conference on self regulation and Social Responsibility in the Spring showed that the beverage alcohol industry needs to build trust and reputation as the public believe the industry is less responsible than the petro-chemical industries, pharmaceuticals and GM companies, infact only tobacco scored lower. There is a full conference report on page 7.

This was closely followed by a fascinating seminar hosted by the British Beer and

Pub Association and Anheuser Busch on the Social Norm Approach to reducing alcohol misuse in the City of Manchester (UK) and in US Colleges and Universities.

'Social Norming' involves education campaigns which look to reverse binge drinking in colleges through publishing facts and figures. Experience shows that banning alcohol on campus or saying 'don't drink' does not work. Social Norming uses figures to illustrate that most people drink sensibly and to show that excess is the exception rather than the norm. The idea is to remove the pressure that college freshmen feel to drink to excess to fit in, as the 'norm' has incorrectly been believed to be binge drinking rather than moderation. A full report on this seminar will appear in the next edition.

Finally the Brewers of Europe held a conference on Beer and Health in Brussels and were able to announce that a European equivalent of the ABRMF for Europe has now commissioned its first research. The initiative, guided by Professor Oliver James of the University of Newcastle aims to help fund impartial alcohol research which to date is underfunded in Europe. A summary of the conference can be found via www.brewersofeurope.org and extracts will appear in the January edition of AIM.

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France

A bill aimed at lifting restrictions on wine sponsorship, particularly during sporting events shown on television, has been drafted by 12 French senators. Restrictions were first introduced in the 1990's as part of the Loi Evin on tobacco and drinks advertising. They have been widely criticised by all strands of the industry, mainly because of their disparity: while as events broadcast to an international public can display adverts for foreign drinks brands, events considered to be 'binational' cannot. The senators claim that this has led to unfair competition for French wine producers and have asked that wine be excluded from existing regulations.

Spain

An attempt to include wine in the country's 'anti botellon' law, designed to curb alcohol abuse in Spain, has been dropped following protest by the wine trade. Nevertheless, certain clauses will still apply, although wine will not now be affected by the warning labels and advertising regulations introduced by the law. Among these are hours and conditions of sale, a ban on sales to underage drinkers, and no-go areas for drinking alcohol.

The decision to withdraw wine from the strictures of the 'antibotellon' law was taken after heated debate and the intervention by the Minister of Agriculture - who defended the unique nature of wine and its prime role in the Spanish diet. Beer and cider producers and suppliers believe the exclusion of wine is unfair as one of the favourite drinks of 'botellon' party goers is a mix of cheap wine and coca cola.

UK

The UK division of Bacardi has dropped Vinnie Jones, the former footballer turned actor, from its advertising campaign. The aggressive image of Vinnie Jones as a role model or suitable image for Bacardi has been criticised by several quarters.

USA

"Alcohol and youth make a dangerous combination, a \$53 billion problem that can lead to increased crime and traffic deaths and one the government, parents and industry need to solve", the Institute of Medicine stated in September. The Washington-based institute, a health policy advisory centre affiliated with the National Academies, urged higher federal and state taxes on alcoholic beverages, tougher state drinking laws, better state identification cards and improved policies for detecting and stopping underage drinking parties. As the report was being issued, the alcoholic beverage industry said it will increasingly target its advertising away from youth.

The Netherlands

The Netherlands has seen a fall in alcohol sales of 27% to 31m litres between January and August this year, according to the Dutch drinks organisation, PDG. The report pointed to an 18% increase in excise duties on alcoholic drinks, as the primary reason for the fall. The increase was made to cover a •70m budget gap. However, PGD chairman, J. Blauw said the move had had a negative effect and may force smaller producers to close down. The increase in duty has also increased the amount of cross border shopping with neighbouring Germany and Belgium. The largest falls in Dutch sales have been on the borders of these countries. Currently taxes, including excise duties account for 75% of the price of alcoholic drinks in the Netherlands.

Sweden

The EC has told Sweden it must relax its laws concerning alcohol purchases from abroad, on the grounds that they currently constitute a barrier to trade. At present, if consumers cannot physically transport the product back to Sweden, they have to request Systembolaget the retail monopoly to bring it in on their behalf.

Binge-Drinking in Ireland

New research shows that 58 % of the drinking done by men in Ireland is binge drinking, the London Press Association reported Oct. 8. The study conducted for Ireland's Health Promotion Unit further found that 48% of all men and 16 % of women in Ireland binge drink at least once a week. Ireland is the highest of all other European countries in term of binge drinking. In the UK the percentage of men who binge drink is 40%, while in France it is 9%.

In addition, more problems, such as falls, unintentional sex and public order offences, were linked to drinkers in Ireland than any other European country. Irish health minister Michael Martin said a number of initiatives are underway to address binge drinking: *"The clear message from this research is that we must change our drinking patterns-we need to cut down and slow our drinking."*

The health ministry recently distributed a "Guide to Rethinking your Drinking," as well as a new advertising campaign that will be shown before movies in cinemas throughout the country. In addition, the new single by Irish artist Sinéad O'Connor will include a booklet with information on alcohol.

A Strategic task Force on Alcohol was set up in 2002. The Minister for Health & Children has now established an interdepartmental group to progress these and to coordinate responses.

The Health Promotion Unit in association with the Drinks Industry Group of Ireland, CERT, the Licensed Vintners' Federation of Ireland has developed a training programme for bar staff on the responsible serving of alcohol. The course was launched in 2001. The RSA programme has been extended, and from January 2003 has been implemented and administered by the National Hospitality Training body, CERT.

Further research includes; 'A Framework for Developing a College Alcohol Policy', 'A & E Survey', 'Survey on Attitudes to Alcohol in Ireland', 'College Survey', and a report on 'The Impact of Alcohol Advertising on Teenagers in Ireland.'

US Government Awards 1st Major Grant for Study of Wine and Health

For the first time, the federal government of the United States has committed a large sum of money to the scientific exploration of the link between moderate wine consumption and lowered risk of heart disease.

The National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute (NHLBI), part of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), has awarded a \$7.6 million, 5-year grant to the School of Medicine at the University of Alabama to examine the cellular, molecular and genetic mechanisms that enables wine components (alcohol and polyphenols) to potentially reduce heart disease.

Francois Booyse, Ph.D., a prominent researcher of cardiovascular disease and wine components, who will lead the research efforts, termed the grant award "a major milestone." While some government funded research studies have investigated the health effects of

moderate drinking, federal agencies have been primarily concerned with research investigations on the adverse effects of alcohol misuse. This new grant will support multiple research projects to better identify some of the mechanisms responsible for the observed positive health effects, as they remain poorly understood.

"This is the first major programmatic effort ever to be recognized and funded by the NHLBI that will focus specifically on the molecular mechanisms underlying the health-related benefits of moderate alcohol/wine consumption.. It represents the first major consensus by both the scientific and health professionals of the emerging importance of the scientific implications, issues and unanswered questions remaining in the rapidly evolving area of wine and cardiovascular health," states Booyse.

Behave Responsibly or Face Curbs in Europe

Europe's advertisers must act responsibly and embrace self-regulation, or face legal curbs on their activities. That was the stark message from *Christopher Graham* – chairman of the **European Advertising Standards Alliance** and director general of Britain's **Advertising Standards Authority** – who warned that marketers were "constantly being scrutinised."

Speaking at the fiftieth anniversary conference of the **World Federation of Advertisers**, Graham declared that the desire to implement further restrictions on advertising by the EC was "unassuaged". The best way to counter this pressure, he argued, is for marketers to uphold the industry's integrity by behaving responsibly and backing self-regulation.

"The challenges for the advertising industry are expanding with the EU,"

Graham continued. *"As more countries join the single market, it's essential that they also participate in the European self-regulatory framework. If self-regulation isn't working in one country, it's more likely that legislation will be implemented that applies to all."*

Speaking of his work with the ASA (the self-regulatory body that oversees UK non-broadcast ads), he warned that the body could not become the ad industry's conscience, nor could it play cops and robbers with advertisers.

Earlier this year, the ASA announced that it had received a record number of complaints about ads in 2002. Plans are currently afoot to extend the body's remit to broadcast commercials.

The warning was not directed particularly at beverage alcohol companies, but to all advertisers and creative agencies.

Work Stress & Alcohol

A new study has shown some positive effects of moderate drinking in buffering the impact of work strains on mental health. The relationship between alcohol intake, work stress and physiological distress in the workplace is a complex one. Alcohol could possibly exacerbate work strains and contribute further to psychological distress or it may help buffer the effects of work strain. Moderate alcohol consumption in response to the tension generated under work strains could lessen the impact of work strains on psychological distress.

High-risk drinkers (more than 10 drinks for men or 15 for women in last 7 days) and abstainers were more likely than others to experience psychological distress, with women more likely than men to report such distress. Compared with low-risk drinkers (less than 10/15 drinks a week), abstainers were 25% more likely to report psychological distress, and high-risk drinkers 75% more likely.

Greater psychological benefits associated with moderate drinking have been shown by other studies and the results of this study are in line with the findings. The researchers found moderating effect of alcohol intake on task-internal strains and psychological distress, particularly on the link with skills utilisation and exposure to physical risks.

The findings suggest that moderate drinking is not directly linked with psychological distress and does not intensify the effect of work strain factors, giving some support to the positive effect of moderate alcohol consumption on stress reduction and mental health.

Source. The moderating effect of alcohol intake on the relationship between work strains and psychological distress. Journal of Studies on Alcohol (2003), 64, 419-427. Marchand, A., Demers, A., Durand, P., & Simard, M., Health and Prevention Social Research Group, University of Montreal Quebec, Canada.

Moderate Drinking May Cut Diabetes Risk

A further study has demonstrated that A moderate amount of alcohol appears to reduce the risk of developing adult-onset (type 2) diabetes. However, for women, heavy drinking increases the risk, according to the Scandinavian study.

In an analysis of pairs of twins with different alcohol habits, those with moderate levels of alcohol consumption had half the risk of diabetes compared with those with low levels of alcohol consumption. The researchers say these results are in line with a number of previous studies that have shown that

moderate alcohol consumers have a 30-to-40 percent reduced risk of type 2 diabetes.

The investigators also found, however, that levels of alcohol consumption of 20 g/day or more appeared to increase the likelihood of diabetes for lean women, but not for overweight women or men.

Also, binge drinking increased the number of diabetes cases among women.

SOURCE: Carlsson S et al. Alcohol Consumption and the Incidence of Type 2 Diabetes: A 20-year follow-up of the Finnish Twin Cohort Study. Diabetes Care 2003;26:2785-90.

Red Wine Could Be Good for Your Lungs

Red wine, already thought to be good for your heart, may be good for your lungs according to Dr John Harvey, chairman of the Communications Committee of the British Thoracic Society. The research was published in the international medical journal Thorax in October.

Resveratrol, found naturally in red wine could help fight chronic bronchitis and emphysema, a study has found, although scientists say there is probably not enough resveratrol in a glass for chronic sufferers to drink their way to good health.

The study found that resveratrol could reduce the amount of harmful chemicals in the lungs that cause the diseases.

The illnesses, known together as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), kill an estimated 2.9 million people a year worldwide, according to the World Health Organization. And smokers are 10 times as likely as non-smokers to die of COPD. "It seems that drinking red wine in moderation as part of a healthy, balanced diet can reduce lung inflammation," stated Dr John Harvey.

In the study, lung fluid samples were taken from 15 smokers and 15 COPD patients. When resveratrol was added to the samples, it cut production of interleukin 8, a chemical that causes inflammation of the lungs. Production of the chemical was cut by 94 percent in smokers and by 88 percent in COPD patients.

COPD is now commonly treated with steroids, but resveratrol might prove more effective. It would not reverse the damage which has occurred to the lungs, but could help stop it from getting any worse, according to the study.

Although there is probably not enough resveratrol in a glass of wine for casual drinking to stop chronic lung disease, the antioxidant could be administered directly with an inhaler claim the authors..

SOURCE: Culpitt SV et al. Inhibition by Red Wine Extract, Resveratrol, of Cytokine Release by Alveolar Macrophages in COPD. Thorax 2003;58:942-6.

Alcohol and Sleep by Dr. Erik Skovenborg

Sleep is not what it used to be. We live in a world where something is going on around the clock and compared to the good old days 100 years ago we spend 25% less time in the arms of Morpheus in the 21st century.

Stress and worries are the cause of poor sleep in many people, however, some of our recreational drugs may also play a role (BMJ 1993;306:573-75). Caffeine has a long half life (five hours) and drinking more than six cups of coffee a day is likely to cause an increased number of disturbances during the night as well as insomnia. Neither are cigarettes a boon to sleep; the average smoker sleeps about 30 minutes less than a non-smoker.

How about a nightcap?

Alcohol is a well-known sedative; a glass of wine, a beer or a toddy has been used as a hypnotic for centuries. The effects of alcohol as a nightcap are a mixture of the good, the bad and the ugly. One of the reasons for the popularity of the nightcap is that the good effects of a drink are the ones to appear first (J Stud Alcohol 1982;43:434-44):

In short, alcohol reduces sleep latency from 28 to 12 minutes i.e a drink makes you doze off faster. A drink will also increase slow wave sleep during the first part of the night and the deep stage 3-4 sleep, tired nature's sweet restorer of body and brain.

According to an Egyptian proverb, one of the worst experiences in life is "to be in bed and sleep not", and since medieval times beer has enjoyed a reputation as a drink with special somnifacient qualities due to its contents of hops. Hops is believed to have a sedative effect on the nervous system. Forty years ago personal experience and the results of an experiment with 50 elderly persons (who on interrogation were found to have difficulties with sleeping) led a New York physician to praise the value of

stout as a sedative and relaxing soporific (Journ Am.GeriatricSoc.1963;11:238-41). The recommended dose of stout was one bottle (342 ml); one-sixth of the amount required to produce an intoxicating level of alcohol in the blood.

No rose without a thorn

O little town of Bethlehem,

How still we see thee lie!

Above thy deep and dreamless sleep

The silent stars go by.

(Phillips Brooks)

In the world of the American poet Phillips Brooks a deep and dreamless sleep was the best sleep possible, however, the vivid dreams of rapid eye movement (REM) sleep act as a refreshing bath on the mind keeping us easy-going and good-tempered. Under normal conditions approximately 25% of total accumulated sleep is spent in REM sleep, however.

Alcohol does affect REM and so we can pay the price of our nightcap. Alcohol can reduce the amount of REM sleep during the first half of the night. Secondly, when blood alcohol concentrations fall to near zero later in the night there are an increased number of wakings as well as an increase in the amount of REM sleep.

The rebound phenomenon may be quite pronounced in some people, especially with larger doses of alcohol (more than 1-2 drinks at bedtime); the result may be complaints of recurrent awakening with tachycardia, sweating, headaches, and intense dream recalls or nightmares from around 3 a.m. and onwards. Sleepers tend to awake during the REM phases of this period when they otherwise would not and find difficulty in returning to sleep thereafter.

The ugly part

If the quantity of alcohol consumed as a nightcap is increased, the benefit of reduced sleep latency disappears but the disruptive effect found in the second half of the sleep increases markedly: more frequent awakenings, worse sleep quality, reduction of deep sleep, and earlier-than-usual waking times. An alcoholic experiences similar, but more severe, types of sleep disruptions. Sleep problems have also long been known to become more common as we grow older. A recent study of 139 alcohol-dependent patients found that the adverse effects of age and alcohol dependency on sleep quality were additive (J Stud Alcohol 2001;62:335-43).

A study in the August 2003 issue of Alcoholism: Clinical and Experimental Research has found that alcoholics can continue to have sleep problems for many months after they quit drinking.

"They take a long time to fall asleep, have problems sleeping through the night, and feel their sleep is not restorative," said Shawn R. Currie, assistant professor of psychiatry and psychology at the University of Calgary and correspondent author for the study. *"Overnight-sleep studies have documented reductions in deep sleep and abnormalities in REM sleep in alcoholics with more than a year of sobriety."*

O gentle sleep

O sleep O gentle sleep!

Nature's soft nurse, how have I frightened thee,

That thou no more wilt weigh mine eyelids down

And Steep my senses into forgetfulness?

(Shakespeare, Henry IV)

Continued on Page 6

Alcohol and Sleep continued from page 5

The best chance of a gentle sleep lies in good sleep hygiene (JAMA 1999;281:991-99):

1. Go to bed only when sleepy
2. Use the bed and bedroom only for sleep and sex
3. Get out of bed and go to another room when unable to fall asleep within 15-20 minutes
4. Repeat this step as often as necessary
5. Arise at the same time every morning regardless of the amount of sleep obtained the previous night
6. Refrain from stimulants like caffeine in the evening

Regarding the famous nightcap you have to recognize the virtues and vices of alcohol. An occasional beer or glass of port before bed may well serve as a relaxing sedative for the normal person with temporary difficulties with sleeping. However, the dire consequences of deviating from the straight and narrow path of an occasional nightcap call for a warning against developing the habit of a drink or two to help to go to sleep - it won't help. Better to enjoy your drink of preference with your meal earlier in the evening.

Erik Skovenborg is a General Practitioner and a founder member of the Scandinavian Medical Alcohol Board. He is a valued member of the AIM Social, Scientific and Medical Council.

British Beer and Pub Association statement in response to UK Government interim Alcohol Strategy paper

GOVERNMENT ALCOHOL STRATEGY -RIGHT TARGET WRONG NUMBERS

The drinks industry shares Government's concern over the misuse of alcohol and fully supports evidence-based policies that tackle the problem decisively and effectively.

"Alcohol misuse needs tackling and treating," said Rob Hayward, Chief Executive of the British Beer & Pub Association. "We also need to get to the root causes of what motivates a significant number of people who think it is acceptable to go out on a Friday or Saturday night, drink to excess and indulge in antisocial behaviour."

Rob Hayward goes on to explain that as members of the Ministerial Advisory Group on the Alcohol Strategy the BBPA has been pleased to work with the Government on this important project and are committed to continuing their work with Government to improve drinking culture.

"The Government's Alcohol Strategy must be based on clear evidence, otherwise we risk, setting unachievable targets, wasting a great deal of money, time and effort chasing shadows and sending out messages that will be ignored because they lack basic credibility. The report is generally well balanced, for example recognising that moderate drinking can be good for health and prevents about 22,000 deaths a year, about the same number as deaths caused by the misuse of alcohol. However, there is some concern that Government is in danger of spoiling a good case by overplaying the numbers. Binge drinking is a widely used, but very loosely defined term. The Strategy Unit has calculated the number of binge drinkers on a base of eight units a day for a man and six for a woman - on this measure nearly one in

five male pensioners is a binge drinker. By using that definition, it is not surprising they come up with a large number. But is it realistic or credible to say that someone drinking two pints of beer at lunchtime and two pints in the evening is a "binge drinker"? The Strategy Unit uses an outdated measure to define the scale of heavy drinking. Weekly units were replaced by the Department of Health in 1995 by the daily unit benchmarks of 2-3 units for women and 3-4 units for men. Consequently, many people drinking within those guidelines have been defined as heavy drinkers in this analysis.

The BBPA concludes that it is also important to fully recognise the enormous contribution the drinks industry makes to the wealth, welfare and well-being of the UK. "We generate more than £30 billion of economic activity, employ more than a million people and contribute more than £12.5 billion in taxes on sales alone to the Treasury for investment in public services. But just as importantly we are at the heart of the nation's social life. More than 40 million adults regularly enjoy meeting together and socialising over a drink, and the vast majority do so responsibly."

Contact details for the BBPA appear on page 10 of AIM.

Systembolaget hit by tax cut

Sales at the Swedish state-owned alcohol retailing monopoly Systembolaget have been hit by Denmark's decision to cut its alcohol excise duties. According to reports in the local press sales in the company's southern operations fell by 17.2% year-on-year in October 2003. Denmark cut its alcohol excise duties by 47% on October 1, 2003

Corporate Social Responsibility - an opportunity or threat?

A report on the WARC Alcoholic drinks conference

by **Helena Conibear**

The World Advertising and Research Centre and ADMAP hosted the 8th Alcoholic Drinks Conference in September, focusing on Corporate Social Leadership(CSR) within the Social Responsibility Debate.

Rita Clifton, Chairman of INTERBRAND made a case for the growing need for Social Leadership by illustrating the corporate success that a responsible and innovative approach can bring. Ms Clifton used a case study of British Petroleum(B.P.) whereby CSR has been used to add value rather than minimising risk or litigation which is often the agenda for CSR.

Further case studies were made by Haimish Pringle of IPA who showed that CSR offers great opportunities. Mr Pringle took the example of Shell International who recognised that they needed to defend their brand reputation and generate a more positive image of their business. A combined programme including sponsorship of a writing prize in the Economist and an internal photographic competition with National Geographic promoting understanding of sustainable development amongst 91,000 employees led to an increase in belief that Shell demonstrates an ethical approach to business from a miserable 4% to 30%.

Pringle also illustrated how Walker crisps through a partnership with News International (the Times and Sun newspapers) and a simple token collecting scheme have contributed 6.8 million books for schools with an equivalent retail value of £38 million. 85% of UK schools participated, making it the largest ever UK consumer promotion. Their brand awareness grew by 16%.

Hugh Burkitt of the Marketing Society highlighted the danger to the Alcoholic Drinks Industry of low public opinion concerning its marketing and illustrated

recent unsuitable campaigns that do no favours to industry ratings. His advice was for joined up thinking whereby CSR must be core to business and not peripheral. Companies should be pro-active and not tokenistic in their approach.

Andrew Brown of the Advertising Standards Association (ASA) stated that the Status quo was not an option even though of 502 new T.V. adverts featuring alcohol just one complaint in the UK was upheld. The status quo cannot hold as R.T.D's are seen as easily accessible to young people coupled with the largest advertising spend. The ASA believes the ITC advertising code is too lax and that watersheds should be reviewed as well as the featuring of alcohol in soap operas and dramas.

Leanne Riley of the World Health Organisation (WHO) gave stark reasons as to why alcohol is high on their agenda, ranking as 5th in rank in the Global Disease Burden. WHO's priorities are the control of marketing of Alcohol to Young People and the **amount** spent on alcohol advertising more than the content of current ads. WHO believes there is not enough regulation of sponsorship (particularly sport and culture), websites and the internet or on premise promotion and is concerned about the marketing of alcohol in countries, such as Asia and Africa where alcohol consumption is not the norm.

Riley stated that self regulations was still too fragmented and varied in enforcement. Riley believed its meeting with Industry leaders in February 2003 was constructive and an important first step in best practise.

Helmut Wagner of The Amsterdam Group has led a road show on self regulation around Europe. He highlighted that ten new countries are joining the EU next year (a potential problem

highlighted by Mr Paaso of the European Commission reported in Volume 12 No.3 of AIM) and that five of those do not have self regulation codes at present. He emphasised that alcohol advertising is often perceived as aggressive or addressing an unsuitable audience, but that this criticism does not tie in with public perception as between just 1 and 7% of advertising complaints across Europe pertain to alcohol. Wagner believes the complaints process needs more consumer awareness and that the free riders or irresponsible promoters must be clamped down on heavily.

Chris Searle of Bacardi Martini highlighted the paradox of consumers who demonstrate both good and bad behaviour and the degree to which the industry is responsible for individual choices and behaviour - ie self responsibility. Brands are in the political spotlight due to the high profile of binge-drinking and youth culture.

Searle believes that soaps, the internet and peer group pressure exert a much stronger influence on drinking behaviour than advertising and marketing. There are no easy solutions as the Loi Evin of France has illustrated - restricted advertising and promotion has had no tangible effect on consumption in France.

Searle also illustrated how producers are relatively powerless and can only form part of a solution - Bacardi has 260 customers, yet their products are available through 200,000 outlets. Searle believes the industries' initiatives should focus on consumer education and industry/public partnerships in schools and colleges. Investment in changing mind set is more beneficial than restriction and prohibition.

Full details of the conference can be obtained from Sarah Miller, event Manager, WARC, PO Box 69, Henley, OXON RG9 1GB. Email: europe@warc.com

Moderate Alcohol Consumption and Vascular Health

by Aafje Sierksma

A new book on moderate consumption and vascular health, based on a Dutch cohort has been written by Aafje Sierksma with the support of Professor D.E. Grobbee and Dr H.F.J. Hendriks of the T.N.O., Nutrition and Food Research, Zeist, the Netherlands.

It is a comprehensive guide to cardiovascular disease (CVD) including CND and cerebrovascular disease and peripheral vascular disease which are the leading causes of morbidity and mortality in the Western world.

Epidemiological studies have convincingly shown how moderate alcohol consumption reduces the risk of CVD. This thesis focuses on the vascular and biochemical effects of moderate alcohol consumption which might impact upon vascular health, in order to clarify the mechanism of CVD protection.

The first chapters look at four cross-sectional studies on aortic stiffness and

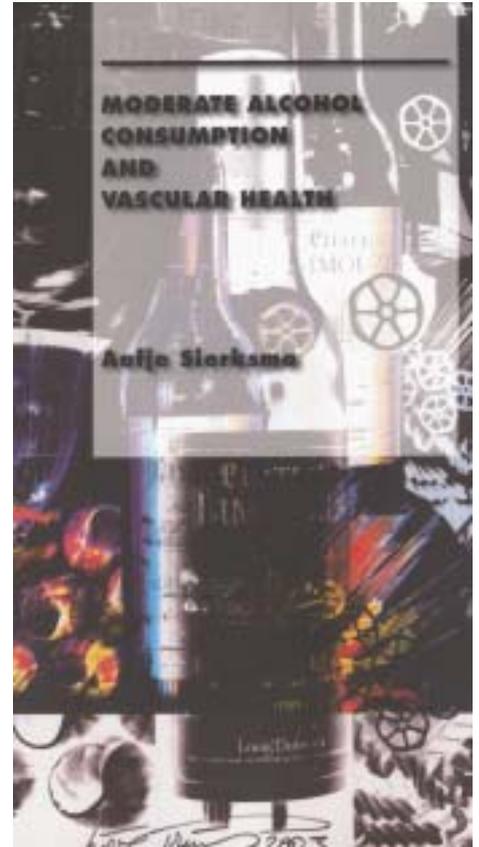
whether it is affected by alcohol consumption.

The increase of 'good' HDL cholesterol by moderate alcohol consumption is looked at in chapter 4 along with alcohol's role in reverse cholesterol transport (whereby cholesterol is taken to the liver for disposal as bile acids.)

Chapter 6 gives results of the first randomised diet control trial on inflammatory factors and C-reactive protein (CRP) which is linked with inflammation and why it decreases with moderate alcohol consumption.

Diabetes, especially type 2 diabetes and alcohol are covered in chapter 9 and finally the fibrinolytic effects of moderate consumption in women.

A conclusion incorporates a general discussion of the findings and suggests future research topics. *Moderate Alcohol Consumption and Vascular Health* by Aafje Sierksma. Thesis Utrecht University 2003 ISBN 90-393-3434-X



The Art of Moderation - an alternative to alcoholism

by John Michael

The Art of Moderation is written by a recovered alcoholic. The book is unusual in that John Michael is now a moderate drinker rather than an abstainer. "It is my intention to demonstrate that, although some alcoholics may never be able to drink moderately, the pretence that all alcoholics are unable to rehabilitate themselves and be moderate drinkers is inaccurate."

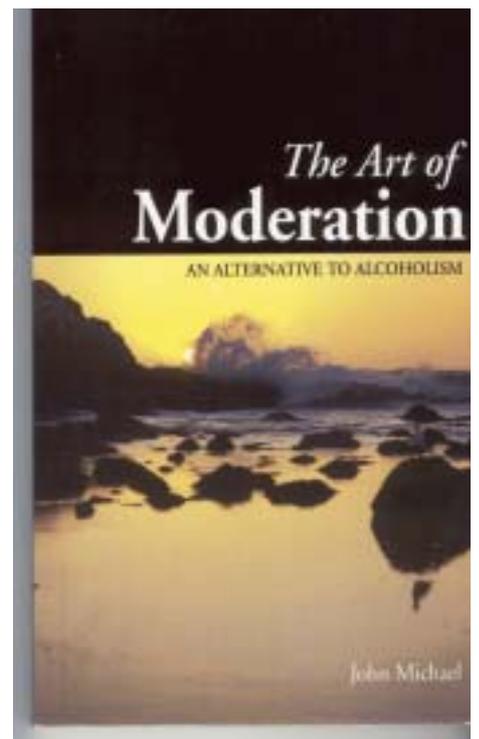
Michael believes the first step is an acknowledgement of overindulgence, which has to be coupled with a decision to change existing habits and an 'openness to instruction.' Following this advice Michael believes you then have to change your thought patterns of associating pleasure and escapism with intoxication to a focus on the hangover and disruption that heavy drinking brings

.Hence you begin to view intoxication as undesirable.

Then the individual needs to change the association of pleasure to moderate behaviour - create a list of benefits, rewards and a sense of control. To change your life to a moderate one might involve changing friends and habits (including diet and exercise). A feeling of control, more independence and appreciation from your family and friends is key.

So how does drinking one drink not turn into a binge? The speed of drinking is the answer states Michael. Sip slowly and don't drink on an empty stomach, or if stressed. Finally he advises alternating drinks and eating if at a party.

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WSA's international code of practice

The Federation Internationale des Vins et Spiriteux (International Federation of Wines and Spirits - FIVS) has decided to follow the Wine and Spirit Association's recommendation of putting together a code of practice for the responsible marketing of drinks, the WSA said today.

The code of practice will provide guidance on topics such as naming, packaging and promotion of alcoholic drinks, and is likely to follow the provisions set by the Portman Group's Code, which was adopted by the UK industry in 1996. In addition, FIVS will examine codes around the world, including those being adopted in other countries in the EU as a result of the efforts of the Amsterdam Group (TAG). Amongst other stipulations, the Portman Group's Code forbids packaging and branding which could encourage drinking to excess, which could attract underage drinkers or which links drinking to sexual success or to illegal drugs.

Quentin Rappoport, director of the WSA, comments: "We are very pleased that our recommendation has been taken on board by FIVS members, who unanimously approved the motion at their last meeting. It is very important that the industry is seen to be opposing alcohol misuse and supporting sensible drinking, and this is a fundamental part of the strategy.

"Experience has shown that voluntary Codes mitigate in favour of harmonisation without incurring the dead hand of legislation, and - more importantly - they put the onus on traders to keep their house in order. Governments should welcome them, and they should be common currency throughout the global trading community," said Rappoport.

Bar training helps sensible drinking

A new Swedish study has shown that server-training programmes for bar tenders can reduce drinking problems in student pubs. A randomised control trial was set up to assess the impact of an educational programme given to bartenders in student pubs. In order to ensure accurate results blood-alcohol concentrations (BACs) of the patrons was measured before and after the intervention. The aim of the server-intervention programme was to decrease alcohol consumption among the patrons in student pubs.

A total of 40 student bartenders participated in the bartender educational programme where a version of the Alcohol Skills Training Program (ASTP) and the Swedish version of Responsible Beverage service (RBS) was used. Bar customers were asked to rate the pub's atmosphere as 'cosy', 'high' or 'rowdy' since the social atmosphere in the pub might influence alcohol consumption.

A more accurate assessment of drinking behaviour is given by measuring BACs directly than self-reports of binge drinking. This feature along with the randomised controlled design, make the findings of this study particularly reliable. These findings provide strong evidence that such server-training programmes can indeed, decrease alcohol consumption among patrons in student pubs.

The programme is continuing to be used at several universities in Sweden and is now an integrated part of the new, annual bartender's education.

Source. Education of key personnel in student pubs leads to a decrease in alcohol consumption among the patrons: a randomised controlled trial. Addiction (2003), 98, 627-633. Johnsson, K.O. & Berglund, M., Clinical Alcohol Research, Lund University, Malmo University Hospital, Sweden.

Drink-driving in France

Research commissioned in France by Brasseries Kronenbourg has revealed that the French population is becoming more aware of the dangers of drink-driving. A survey last month by TNS-Sofres of 1,000 adults showed that 68% of respondents claimed that they were more aware of the risks and paid more attention to their driving habits than before. Heightened awareness of the dangers of drink-driving might well help pave the way for changes in the way the message is got across to the public, the study reports. In the light of these findings, the French brewer has decided to launch a new prevention campaign titled 'La ligne de conduite alcool', specifically targeting the problem of drink-driving. Their action plan includes distributing 200,000 breath-alyzers, making a prestige non-alcoholic beer widely available in bars and cafes, and introducing a new 15cl glass in January next year to make it easier for people to control the amount of alcohol they drink.

France to change wording of warning message

As part of the public health bill which was first submitted for discussion last Spring and has just been voted by the French National Assembly, the warning message appearing on all drinks related items is to be modified. Currently the message reads; 'L'abus d'alcool est dangereux pour la sante' (excessive drinking damages your health). This is to be replaced by wording which is to comply with requirements laid down by the departments of health and agriculture. The fear that petrol forecourt sales of alcohol would be banned has been allayed by the bill, but the industry is concerned the health warning wording could be very negative. This is because the bill refers to light drinking rather than moderate consumption and the departments have a free rein to decide on the wording. The bill is part of the government drive to reduce cancer rates. The bill will now go for a first reading by the senate

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