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Germany

Munich will partially ban alcohol if coronavirus cases reach a certain threshold. Amid a rise in infections, the city of Munich will limit alcohol sales and ban late-night public consumption if infection rates rise above 35 confirmed infections per 100,000 residents. Alcohol sales would be prohibited after 9 pm and its consumption in public would be prohibited after 11 pm.

South Africa

On 17 August, South African President Cyril Ramaphosa lifted the ban on the sale of alcohol and tobacco and relaxed other lockdown restrictions as the country's coronavirus crisis eases.

Bans on alcohol and tobacco sales were imposed on March 27, to reduce pressure on trauma wards and limit respiratory diseases. While sales of alcohol for home consumption were allowed to resume on June 1, the ban was reimposed on July 13 after trauma admissions surged.

Also in August, Transport Minister Fikile Mbalula has said that his department will work to amend current drink-driving guidelines, bringing in a 'zero tolerance' rule for drivers. The minister hopes to implement the changes by December.

The South African Automobile Association rejected Mbalula's plans, saying that a 0% limit 'does nothing to deter those who already break the law'. The tourist industry have criticised the proposal, saying that the amendment would shrink business for restaurants, hotels, and clubs.

Australia

New South Wales Customer Service Minister, Victor Dominello, wants to relax rules to allow alcohol to be served outdoors more easily in a bid to transform Sydney into a more cosmopolitan and sophisticated city like those in France, Spain and Italy.

Mr Dominello, whose portfolio includes liquor regulation, said greater flexibility for hospitality venues could also ease pressure on the struggling hospitality industry and ease risks around COVID-19 clusters as the weather heats up.

Dubai

Dubai has changed the system for granting permission to residents to legally purchase alcohol.

By law, non-Muslim residents were previously supposed to carry red plastic cards issued by the Dubai police that permitted them to purchase, transport and consume beer, wine and liquor. These red cards have now been replaced with a black card and a simplified application process requiring only an Emirati national ID card. In the old system, employers could block non-Muslims from obtaining a card even if an employee qualified for it, but an application no longer requires an employer's permission. Purchase restrictions based on salaries also have been eased.

The new card system follows other recent changes in Dubai to allow tourists and visitors to buy alcohol from distributors simply by using their passports.



Effects of alcohol on the cardiovascular system in women

Cardiovascular disease (CVD) is the leading cause of morbidity and mortality for women. Therefore, understanding the potential interaction between sex and alcohol consumption on the cardiovascular system is important. A review published in the journal *Alcohol Research, Current Reviews*, summarises the relationship between alcohol consumption and common CVDs in women and highlights potential differences from men.

Except for risk of hypertension, no sex-related effects of alcohol consumption on the risk for coronary heart disease and stroke have been reported, and data on the sex-related effects on risk for peripheral arterial disease are limited. For women, alcohol consumption has a J-shaped relationship with hypertension. About 1 to 2 standard drinks per day is associated with lower risk for the development of hypertension, whereas for men, the relationship is relatively linear. In the area of alcoholic cardiomyopathy, the prevalence is greater for men, but women may develop alcoholic cardiomyopathy at a lower lifetime level of alcohol consumption. Overall, data support that 1 to 2 standard drinks per day for women and men is associated with a lower risk of CVD, and higher daily amounts may increase the risk of CVD.

The authors comment that biologic sex is an important determinant of health and disease. Over the past several decades, research has revealed sex differences in the epidemiology, risk, clinical manifestations, pathophysiology, and progression of many diseases, including cardiovascular disease (CVD) and alcohol-induced pathologies.

The review presents the effects of alcohol consumption on the cardiovascular system in women, focusing on prevalent cardiovascular conditions such as hypertension, coronary heart disease (myocardial infarction), stroke, and peripheral arterial disease. The cardiovascular disorders are briefly defined, sex differences in the prevalence and prognosis of the disorders are discussed, followed by examination of the sex differences in alcohol's effects on those conditions. This review also reports on the sex differences in the prevalence, clinical manifestations, and outcomes associated with alcoholic cardiomyopathy.

Source: Piano MR, Thur LA, Hwang CL, Phillips SA. Effects of Alcohol on the Cardiovascular System in Women. *Alcohol Res.* 2020;40(2):12. Published 2020 Jul 30. doi.org/10.35946/arcr.v40.2.12 arcr.niaaa.nih.gov/arcr402/article12.htm.

Younger red wine 'more beneficial' than aged wines, study finds

Younger red wines are likely to be more beneficial than aged wines, a study from Australia has found, due to the significant decrease in healthy antioxidants in wine over time.

The study, conducted by Australian's Central Queensland's CQ University and published in the *Australian Journal of Grape and Wine Research*, looked at 16 wines from Australia and New Zealand that ranged in age from one to six years old, to see the effect of ageing on trans-resveratrol, a naturally occurring antioxidant in grapes and red wine that has been proven to have cardiovascular, anti-inflammatory, and anti-diabetic effects.

The researchers expected the concentration of free trans-resveratrol in wine to increase with storage because of hydrolysis of the resveratrol (the chemical breakdown of the biocompound as it reacts with water), however after researchers

tested the wines at the start of the study and again after 16 months storage, they found that concentrations of trans-resveratrol in the wine had decreased by an average of 76% over time, with decay rate proving independent of the growing conditions or year of vintage.

The researchers say that the data suggests that transformation of trans- to cis-resveratrol takes place due to residual enzymatic activity (rather than being catalysed by light or acid). In general, this may reduce the anticipated health benefits of the wine given that cis-resveratrol displays fewer health benefits than the trans isomer.

Source: Naiker, M., Anderson, S., Johnson, J., Mani, J., Wakeling, L. and Bowry, V. (2020), Loss of trans-resveratrol during storage and ageing of red wines. *Australian Journal of Grape and Wine Research*. doi.org/10.1111/ajgw.12449.



Dietary alcohol and fat differentially affect plasma cholesteryl ester transfer activity and triglycerides in normo- and hypertriglyceridemic subjects

Moderate alcohol consumption is associated with increased 'good' plasma high-density lipoprotein (HDL)-cholesterol concentrations and reduced risk for cardiovascular disease. Plasma cholesteryl ester transfer activity mediates the exchange of HDL-cholesteryl ester (CE) for the triacylglycerol (TAG) of very-low-density lipoproteins.

Scientists compared the effects of three challenges, Alcohol, saturated fat, and (Alcohol + saturated fat), on plasma cholesteryl ester transfer activity, cholesterol, nonesterified fatty acids, and triacylglycerol among normo-triglyceridemic and mildly hypertriglyceridemic volunteers having a range of plasma triacylglycerol concentrations.

The major changes were (1) cholesteryl ester transfer activity increased more after ingestion of saturated fat and (Alcohol + saturated fat) in the HTG group versus the normo-triglyceridemic group; (2) after all three challenges, elevation of plasma triacylglycerol concentration persisted longer in the mildly hypertriglyceridemic versus normo-triglyceridemic group. Plasma cholesterol was not affected by the three dietary challenges, while alcohol increased nonesterified fatty acids more in the mildly hypertriglyceridemic group

than the normo-triglyceridemic group. Plasma triacylglycerol best predicted plasma cholesteryl ester transfer activity, suggesting that intestinally derived lipoproteins are acceptors of HDL-CE. Unexpectedly, ingestion of (Alcohol + saturated fat) reduced the strength of the correlation between plasma triacylglycerol and cholesteryl ester transfer activity, that is the effects of (saturated fat and Alcohol) on plasma cholesteryl ester transfer activity are not synergistic nor additive but rather mutually suppressive.

The researchers conclude that the alcohol-mediated inhibition of HDL-cholesteryl ester transfer to chylomicrons maintains a higher plasma HDL-cholesterol concentration, which is athero-protective, although the suppressive metabolite underlying this correlation could be acetate, the terminal alcohol metabolite, other factors, including cholesteryl ester transfer activity inhibitors, are also likely important.

Source: Gaubatz, John & Kurins, Baiba & Rosales, Corina & Pownall, Henry. (2020). Dietary Alcohol and Fat Differentially Affect Plasma Cholesteryl Ester Transfer Activity and Triglycerides in Normo- and Hypertriglyceridemic Subjects. *Lipids*. 55. doi.org/10.1002/lipd.12237.

The alcohol–high-density lipoprotein athero-protective axis

An open access review in the journal *Biomolecules* states that the ingestion of alcohol is associated with numerous changes in human energy metabolism, especially that of plasma lipids and lipoproteins.

Regular moderate alcohol consumption is associated with reduced atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease (ASCVD), an effect that has been attributed to the concurrent elevations of plasma high-density lipoprotein-cholesterol (HDL-C) concentrations. More recent evidence has accrued against the hypothesis that raising plasma HDL concentrations prevents ASCVD so

that other metabolic processes associated with alcohol consumption have been considered. The review explored the roles of other metabolites induced by alcohol consumption—triglyceride-rich lipoproteins, non-esterified free fatty acids, and acetate, the terminal alcohol metabolite in athero-protection. Current evidence suggests that acetate has a key role in athero-protection but additional studies are needed, the authors conclude.

Source: Rosales, C.; Gillard, B.K.; Gotto, A.M., Jr.; Pownall, H.J. The Alcohol–High-Density Lipoprotein Athero-Protective Axis. *Biomolecules* 2020, 10, 987. doi.org/10.3390/biom10070987.



Influence of moderate beer consumption on human gut microbiota and its impact on fasting glucose and β -cell function

Beer contains polyphenolic compounds as well as phenolic acids that have a potential positive effect on human health. A study explored the impact of moderate beer consumption on human health and gut microbiota diversity.

In two studies, participants consumed three hundred fifty-five mL of non-alcoholic beer or alcoholic beer daily for 30 days. Anthropometric measures, blood samples for biochemistry, and fecal samples for microbiota analysis were collected on Day 1 and Day 30.

Non-alcoholic beer and alcoholic beer have effects on the composition of the gut microbiota, favouring the proliferation of Bacteroidetes with respect to Firmicutes. No increase in weight, waist, and hip parameters was observed, and the liver and lipid profile values were not modified for non-alcoholic beer. In addition, the consumption of non-alcoholic beer induced a decrease in fasting blood serum glucose and an increase in functional β cells. With the consumption of alcoholic beer, there was an increase in blood serum glucose and

a decrease in functional β cells. In general, beer consumption neither changed anthropometric values, nor affected liver function. Although the glucose values decreased with non-alcoholic beer or increased with alcoholic beer, they remained within the normal range.

The authors' conclusion is that moderate consumption of non-alcoholic beer has a positive effect on human health via supplementation of biological active polyphenol and phenolic acids, and by enrichment of the gut microbiota diversity with beneficial bacteria, while the presence of alcohol in alcoholic beer interferes with this effect. They do however state that more work should be done on this topic before general conclusions are drawn.

Source: F Hernández-Quiroz, K Nirmalkar, L E Villalobos-Flores, S Murugesan, Y Cruz-Narváez, E Rico-Arzate, C Hoyo-Vadillo, A Chavez-Carbajal, M L Pizano-Zárate, J García-Mena, Influence of moderate beer consumption on human gut microbiota and its impact on fasting glucose and β -cell function, *Alcohol*, Volume 85, 2020, Pages 77-94. doi.org/10.1016/j.alcohol.2019.05.006.

Cognitive functioning related to binge alcohol and cannabis co-use in abstinent adolescents and young adults

Despite preliminary evidence of unique acute cognitive and psychopharmacological changes attributable to combined alcohol and cannabis use, few studies have investigated more chronic effects of same-day co-use, particularly during neurodevelopmentally sensitive periods. Therefore, relationships between past-month binge alcohol and cannabis co-use and cognitive functioning were examined in adolescents and young adults.

Data from the Imaging Data in Emerging Adults with Addiction (IDEAA) Consortium were used to assess cognitive functioning in 232 emerging adults, aged 15–26 years old, with a large range of substance use who were abstinent for at least 3 weeks. Multiple regressions assessed cognitive functioning by past-month binge episodes, cannabis use episodes, and same-day co-use,

controlling for covariates (e.g., study site, sex, age). After correcting for multiple comparisons, more past-month co-use episodes were related to decreased Ruff 2&7 selective attention accuracy. Sex significantly covaried with California Verbal Learning Test–Second Edition initial learning.

The authors comment that although few significant relationships were found and effect sizes were modest, the persistence of an effect on attention despite a period of sustained abstinence highlights the need to carefully investigate patterns of substance use and potential independent and interactive effects on the developing brain.

Source: Wade NE, Bagot KS, Tapert SF, Gruber SA, Filbey FM, Lisdahl KM. Cognitive Functioning Related to Binge Alcohol and Cannabis Co-Use in Abstinent Adolescents and Young Adults. *J Stud Alcohol Drugs*. 2020;81(4):479-483. doi.org/10.15288/jsad.2020.81.479.



A healthy lifestyle pattern and the risk of symptomatic gallstone disease

The combined role of diet and other lifestyle factors on symptomatic gallstones has not been widely studied. Research published in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition found that adopting a healthy lifestyle, which included moderate alcohol consumption, can help to prevent a considerable proportion of symptomatic gallstone diseases.

60,768 women from the Nurses' Health Study (NHS) and 40,744 men from the Health Professionals Follow-up Study (HPFS) were followed from baseline (1986) until 2012. Symptomatic gallstone disease was self-reported and validated by review of medical records. The association between the healthy lifestyle (HLS) (including healthy diet, moderate alcohol and regular coffee intakes, never smoking, physical activity, and normal weight) and the risk of symptomatic gallstone disease was investigated using Cox proportional hazards regression.

During 1,156,079 and 769,287 person-years of follow-up, respectively, 6,946 women and 2,513 men reported symptomatic gallstone disease. Comparing 6 with 0 points of the HLS, the

multivariable HR of symptomatic gallstone disease was 0.26 (95% CI: 0.15, 0.45) for women, and 0.17 (95% CI: 0.07, 0.43) for men. For individual lifestyle factors, multivariable and mutually adjusted partial population attributable risks (women and men) were 33% and 23% for BMI <25 kg/m², 10% and 18% for ≥2 cups of coffee per day, 13% and 7% for moderate alcohol intake, 8% and 11% for a high Alternate Healthy Eating Index 2010, 9% and 5% for being physically active, and 1% and 5% for never smoking. The full population attributable risk percentage for all factors combined was 62% and 74%, respectively.

Findings from these large prospective studies indicate that adopting a healthy lifestyle, especially maintaining a healthy weight, can help to prevent a considerable proportion of symptomatic gallstone diseases.

Source: J Wirth, AD Joshi, M Song, DH Lee, FK Tabung, TT Fung, AT Chan, C Weikert, M Leitzmann, WC Willett, E Giovannucci, K Wu. A healthy lifestyle pattern and the risk of symptomatic gallstone disease: results from 2 prospective cohort studies, *The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, Volume 112, Issue 3, September 2020, Pages 586–594, doi.org/10.1093/ajcn/nqaa154.

Protective effects of polyphenols present in Mediterranean diet on endothelial dysfunction

Endothelial dysfunction tends to be the initial indicator in proinflammatory state and macro- and microvascular complications, such as atherosclerosis and cardiovascular diseases. It has been shown that certain compounds in diet can generate beneficial effects on cardiovascular disease due to its interactions with endothelial cells. A review investigated whether certain polyphenols present in the Mediterranean diet, specifically catechin, quercetin, resveratrol, and urolithin, could exert positive effects on endothelial dysfunction.

After analysis of numerous papers, the researchers found that polyphenols aiding endothelial function is beneficial not only for patients with cardiovascular disease, diabetes, or endothelial

dysfunction but for all people as it can improve the effects of aging on the endothelia. The additional benefit of these polyphenols on weight loss further improves health and lowers the risk of several diseases, including those caused by endothelial dysfunction. However, it is important to note that the dosages in the majorities of the studies mentioned in this review were of supplemental rather than nutritionally relevant quantities, and therefore, the recommended dosages are difficult to determine.

Source: Stromsnes K, Mas-Bargues C, Gambini J, Gimeno-Mallench L. Protective Effects of Polyphenols Present in Mediterranean Diet on Endothelial Dysfunction. *Oxid Med Cell Longev*. 2020;2020:2097096. Published 2020 Aug 6. doi.org/10.1155/2020/2097096.



No association between alcohol consumption and risk of atrial fibrillation

Alcohol intake has been related to atrial fibrillation (AF) in observational studies. Whether alcohol intake is causally associated with atrial fibrillation is unknown. Mendelian randomization (MR) approaches can assist in assessing causality.

A study examined the causal association of alcohol intake with the risk of atrial fibrillation. A two-sample Mendelian randomization (MR) analysis was performed to estimate the causal effects of alcohol consumption, alcohol dependence, or alcohol use disorder identification test (AUDIT) scores on atrial fibrillation. Summary data on single nucleotide polymorphisms associated with atrial fibrillation were obtained from a genome-wide association study with up to 1,030,836 participants.

Mendelian randomization analysis revealed nonsignificant association of genetically predicted alcohol consumption with risk of atrial fibrillation using fixed- and random-effect IVW approaches (odds ratio (OR) [95% confidence interval (CI)] = 1.004 [0.796–1.266], P = 0.975; OR [95% CI] = 1.004 [0.766–1.315], P = 0.979). Genetically predicted alcohol dependence was not causally associated with atrial fibrillation and there was no significantly causal association between AUDIT and atrial fibrillation.

This MR study did not find evidence of a causal association between alcohol intake and AF.

Source: No association between alcohol consumption and risk of atrial fibrillation: A two-sample Mendelian randomization study. Jiang, Qi et al. *Nutrition, Metabolism and Cardiovascular Diseases*, Volume 30, Issue 8, 1389 – 1396. doi.org/10.1016/j.numecd.2020.04.014.

Antioxidant properties of plant polyphenols in the counteraction of alcohol-abuse induced damage: Impact on the Mediterranean diet

Polyphenols are antioxidants contained in plants as olive and grape. As part of the Mediterranean diet, they may decrease the risk of cancer, of chronic and neurodegenerative diseases. Alcohol consumption plays a detrimental effect on health, causing tissue damage and disrupting the metabolism of Neurotrophins (NTs). NTs are crucial proteins for the life cycle of neuronal and non-neuronal cells. Alcohol abuse elicits changes in NTs levels in the brain and in other target organs, however, it was observed minor damage in animals early exposed to red wine, probably due to the antioxidant effects of polyphenols. Indeed, data show that resveratrol or other polyphenols extracted from the olive can effectively counteract serum free radicals' formation caused by chronic alcohol intake, contrasting also alcohol-induced NTs liver elevation. A review published in the *Journal of Functional Foods* provides updates to evidence about the antioxidant properties of polyphenols and their role in counteracting alcohol-induced damage.

The authors conclude that the Mediterranean diet is globally known as the dietary pattern that provides the greatest number of positive effects on health that includes food and drink rich in polyphenols as vegetables, fruits, extra-virgin olive oil and a moderate intake of wine. Thus, the detrimental effects of ethanol contained in alcoholic beverages seem to be partly counterbalanced by the presence of polyphenols in the foods and extra-virgin olive oil which yield an important antioxidant action.

Source: Marco Fiore, Marisa Patrizia Messina, Carla Petrella, Alessio D'Angelo, Antonio Greco, Massimo Ralli, Giampiero Ferraguti, Luigi Tarani, Mario Vitali, Mauro Ceccanti. Antioxidant properties of plant polyphenols in the counteraction of alcohol-abuse induced damage: Impact on the Mediterranean diet, *Journal of Functional Foods*, Volume 71, 2020. doi.org/10.1016/j.jff.2020.104012.



Alcohol consumption and risk of breast and ovarian cancer: A Mendelian randomization study

Alcohol consumption has been found to increase the risk of breast cancer in observation studies, yet it remains unknown if alcohol is related to other hormone-dependent cancers such as ovarian cancer. No Mendelian randomization (MR) studies have been performed to assess a potential causal relationship between alcohol use and risk of breast and ovarian cancer.

Researchers aimed to determine whether alcohol consumption is causally associated with the risk of female hormone-dependent cancers, by using summary level genetic data from the hitherto largest genome-wide association studies conducted on alcohol consumption (with 1.5 million individuals), breast and ovarian cancer (122,977 and 25,509 cases respectively). The researchers examined three different alcohol intake exposures, drinks per week (drinks/week), alcohol use disorder (AUD) and age-adjusted alcohol use disorder identification test (AUDIT-C), to reflect the general and harmful drinking behaviour. The researchers constructed updated and stronger instruments using ninety-nine drinks/week-related SNPs, nine AUD-related SNPs and thirteen AUDIT-C-related SNPs and estimated

the causal relationship applying several two-sample MR methods.

The research did not find any evidence to support for a causal association between alcohol consumption and risk of breast cancer, neither with its subtypes including ER-positive and ER-negative breast cancer, using any of the three alcohol-related exposures. For ovarian cancer, a reduced risk with alcohol consumption was identified, where a borderline significance was found for AUDIT-C but not for drinks/week or AUD. The effect attenuated to null excluding SNPs associated with potential confounders.

The researchers conclude that they did not find any compelling evidence in support for a causal relationship between genetically predicted alcohol consumption and risk of breast or ovarian cancer, consistent across three different alcohol-related exposures. Future MR studies validating these findings are needed, when large-scale alcohol consumption GWAS results become available.

Source: Zhu, Jingjing & Jiang, Xia & Niu, Zheng. (2020). Alcohol consumption and risk of breast and ovarian cancer: A Mendelian randomization study. *Cancer Genetics*. 245. doi.org/10.1016/j.cancergen.2020.06.001.

The association between the level of adherence to the Mediterranean diet and successful aging

A study evaluated the association between the level of adherence to the Mediterranean diet (which includes moderate alcohol consumption), and successful aging, taking into consideration the overall dietary pattern, rather than individual foods, among middle-aged and older individuals.

A harmonised dataset of middle-aged and older participants (>50 years old) from the ATTICA (n=1,128) and MEDIS (n=2,221) population-based cross-sectional studies was used. Socio-demographic, anthropometric, clinical and lifestyle characteristics were measured in both studies and harmonised using standardised procedures. Level of adherence to the Mediterranean diet was evaluated using the MedDietScore (range 0–55, “Low” adherence <34, “High” >38). Successful aging was evaluated using the validated successful aging index (SAI, range 0–10) comprising of health-related, social, lifestyle and clinical characteristics.

The results showed that adherence to the Mediterranean diet was positively associated with a higher successful ageing index ($b \pm SE$ “High” vs. “Low”: 1.094 ± 0.130 , and “Moderate” vs “Low”: 0.476 ± 0.156).

Mediterranean diet or dietary patterns that are close to this pattern, should be actively promoted and encouraged to middle aged and older people to achieve successful aging, the researchers argue.

Source: Alexandra Foscolou, Nathan M. D’Cunha, Nenad Naumovski, Stefanos Tyrovolas, Christina Chrysohoou, Loukianos Rallidis, Evangelos Polychronopoulos, Antonia-Leda Matalas, Labros S. Sidossis, Demosthenes Panagiotakos, The association between the level of adherence to the Mediterranean diet and successful aging: An analysis of the ATTICA and MEDIS (MEDiterranean Islands Study) epidemiological studies, *Archives of Gerontology and Geriatrics*, Volume 89, 2020, 104044. doi.org/10.1016/j.archger.2020.104044.



Assessing alcohol consumption through wastewater-based epidemiology: Spain as a case study

In Spain, the first nationwide study has been conducted to assess alcohol consumption from a wastewater biomarker. The study sample included around 6 million people and employed an alternative and complementary method to those approaches currently used to estimate alcohol consumption by the population. This method, known as wastewater-based epidemiology (WBE), allows back-calculating the alcohol consumption rate in a given population from the concentrations of a selected biomarker measured in wastewater.

Composite (24-h) wastewater samples were collected at the inlet of 17 wastewater treatment plants located in 13 Spanish cities for seven consecutive days in 2018. The sampled area covered 12.8% of the Spanish population. Wastewater samples were analysed to determine the concentration of ethyl sulfate, the biomarker used to back-calculate alcohol consumption.

Alcohol consumption ranged from 4.5 to 46 mL/day/inhabitant. Differences in consumption were statistically significant among the investigated cities and between weekdays and weekends. WBE-derived estimates of alcohol consumption

were comparable to those reported by its corresponding region in the Spanish National Health Survey in most cases. At the national level, comparable results were obtained between the WBE-derived annual consumption rate (5.7 ± 1.2 L ethanol per capita (aged 15+)) and that reported by the National Health Survey (4.7 L ethanol per capita (aged 15+)).

This is the largest WBE study carried out to date in Spain to estimate alcohol consumption rates. It confirms that this approach is useful for establishing spatial and temporal patterns of alcohol consumption, which could contribute to the development of health care management plans and policies. Contrary to established methods, it allows obtaining information in a fast and relatively economical way.

Source: E López-García, C Pérez-López, C Postigo, V Andreu, L Bijlsma, I González-Mariño, F Hernández, R María Marcé, R Montes, Y Picó, E Pocurull, A Rico, R Rodil, M Rosende, Y Valcárcel, O Zuloaga, J Benito Quintana, M López de Alda. Assessing alcohol consumption through wastewater-based epidemiology: Spain as a case study, *Drug and Alcohol Dependence*, Volume 215, 2020, 108241. doi.org/10.1016/j.drugalcdep.2020.108241.

Modifiable lifestyle factors and heart failure

Lifestyle factors may be important targets in the prevention of heart failure. The current knowledge on the relationship between lifestyle factors and heart failure originates mostly from observational studies. The objective of this study was to investigate causal associations of multiple lifestyle factors with heart failure risk by using Mendelian randomization.

Researchers obtained summary statistics data for single nucleotide polymorphisms associated with 5 lifestyle factors at genome-wide significance in genome-wide association studies of European-descent individuals: smoking, alcohol consumption, coffee consumption, physical activity, and sleep duration. The corresponding data for heart failure were acquired from a genome-wide association study comprising 47,309 cases and 930,014 controls of European ancestry.

Genetic predisposition to smoking initiation (ever smoked regularly) was robustly associated with a

higher odds of heart failure (odds ratio: 1.28; 99% CI: 1.21-1.35). Genetically predicted longer sleep duration was associated with a lower odds of heart failure (odds ratio per hour/day: 0.73; 99% CI: 0.60-0.89). No associations of alcohol consumption, coffee consumption, and physical activity with heart failure were found.

This Mendelian randomization study showed that smoking initiation increases heart failure risk, whereas longer sleep duration decreases the risk of heart failure. Sleep duration should be regarded as novel risk factor in heart failure prevention guidelines. The authors comment that the potential causal role of alcohol and coffee consumption and physical activity for heart failure warrants further investigation in future larger Mendelian randomization analyses

Source: Sabine van Oort, Joline W.J. Beulens, Adriana J. van Ballegooijen, M. Louis Handoko, Susanna C. Larsson, Modifiable lifestyle factors and heart failure: A Mendelian randomization study, *American Heart Journal*, Volume 227, 2020, Pages 64-73. doi.org/10.1016/j.ahj.2020.06.007.



Teens who crave excitement are more likely to smoke and use multiple illicit substances

A study of high school seniors in the U.S. suggests that teens who are less satisfied with their lives and who seek out risky experiences and exciting, unpredictable friends are more likely to use multiple illicit substances on a regular basis.

The study authors comment that in the US the increased popularity of e-cigarette use among high school students and the legalisation of marijuana across many states has resulted in new patterns of poly-substance use (PSU). In their study they sought to understand contemporary patterns of PSU and their associations with individual social-emotional characteristics (sensation seeking, perceived harm, life satisfaction) and social-contextual factors (parental involvement, school norms, academics, and behaviours).

Using data from 8,417 12th-grade students who took part in the 2016 Monitoring the Future project, the relationship among individual characteristics, social-contextual factors, and patterns of PSU was modelled. Three patterns of PSU were identified: 72% of teens in the sample were low-level users who for the most part abstained. These students associated the greatest risks with substance use, particularly heavy drinking and vaping. A second group of teens, about 24% of the sample, were primarily marijuana users, but also dabbled with cigarettes or e-cigarettes, alcohol and other drugs. Polysubstance users accounted for about 4% of the study sample. "Students who scored the highest on sensation-seeking viewed substance use as less harmful than the low-level users that mostly abstained from drinking, smoking and using drugs," said Tan, the first author of the study. "While the high school years are typically a time during which risk-taking and sensation-seeking peak, our results indicate that there are marked differences in sensation-seeking among students who regularly use substances compared with those who don't."

IARD report on the use of Mendelian randomization in alcohol research

To date, there have been no systematic reviews or meta-analysis of Mendelian-randomization-based alcohol research on all-cause mortality, cardiovascular disease, and total cancer. The IARD have created a paper which documents initial

Students with pre-dominant marijuana use were differentiated from those with PSU by having higher perceived harm of electronic and regular cigarettes, heavy alcohol use, and better academic grades. Furthermore, students with both polysubstance and pre-dominant marijuana use, when compared to those with low-use, had lower life satisfaction, higher sensation seeking, lower perceived harm of substance use, poorer grades, and more disciplinary problems.

Parental involvement in the students' schooling, such as helping with or checking on whether teens did their homework, differentiated the low-level users from their peers who were habitual marijuana users. Teens' academic performance and their disciplinary referrals were important predictors of substance use patterns as well, the researchers found.

"Although 12th graders are on the threshold of adulthood, parental involvement and students' engagement in school are still critical at this time," Tan said. "These findings emphasise the importance of parents taking active roles in their children's lives, their schooling and what they do outside the home."

To mitigate the risks of poor developmental outcomes associated with teens' poly-substance use, the researchers suggest that schools are encouraged to develop a continuum of multi-tiered preventative and intervention approaches that address students' academic and behavioural needs and promote high school completion.

Source: Kevin Tan, Jordan P. Davis, Douglas C. Smith & Wang Yang (2020) Individual, Family, and School Correlates across Patterns of High School Poly-substance Use, *Substance Use & Misuse*, 55:5, 743-751. doi.org/10.1080/10826084.2019.1701035

work to synthesise published research in this area, but they stress that this is not considered to be a comprehensive review.

iard.org/getattachment/b0ceee89-304e-4a1d-8fb2-b8fba5f982d3/iardanalysis-mendelianrandomizationalcoholresearch-2020.pdf



Driving under the influence of alcohol in the US - NSDUH, 2002–2017

Using data from the National Survey on Drug Use and Health, a study analysed the prevalence of driving under the influence of alcohol (DUI) between 2002–2017 looking for changing trends and to identify populations at elevated risks of alcohol-involved driving.

Since 2002, the prevalence of DUI of alcohol has gradually decreased from a high of 15.1% in 2002–2004 to 11.8% in 2012–2014 and 8.5% in 2016–2017. Decreasing trends were observed across all major sociodemographic and criminal justice subgroups (except older adults). However, men, young adults, Whites, and those with higher household income continued to be associated with greater risks of alcohol-involved driving. DUI

arrests continued to increase among women, narrowing the gender gap.

The researchers comment that despite the decreased alcohol-involved driving over the past decade, there remains worrying levels among young adult males. This underscores the need for public awareness campaigns targeting young adult males. Further research is needed to elucidate the potential differences in the populations who reported driving under any influence of alcohol and who were involved in fatal crashes.

Source: S Oh, M.G. Vaughn, C. P. Salas-Wright, M.A. Abi Nader, M Sanchez. Driving under the influence of Alcohol: Findings from the NSDUH, 2002–2017. Addictive Behaviours. September 2020. doi.org/10.1016/j.addbeh.2020.106439.

Changes over time in young adults' harmful alcohol consumption

Although young adults are drinking less often and consuming smaller quantities than previously, the evidence on trends in harmful alcohol consumption in this age group is limited. A study conducted in Australia examined changes over the last 25 years in harmful alcohol consumption among young adults.

A literature identified articles reporting on Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test (AUDIT) scores in young adults aged 18–24 years. A meta-analysis showed that young adults' AUDIT scores decreased between 1989 and 2015, representing a 0.63 standard deviation change over this period. Variance did not change over this time, suggesting

scores decreased equally over the distribution.

The authors say that their results indicate that harmful alcohol consumption in young adults may have declined between 1989 and 2015. Ongoing data collection is required to evaluate whether these declines in young adulthood persist into later life, and future research should explore the reasons for declining harmful alcohol consumption in young adults.

Source: R Visontay, L Mewton, M Sunderland, K Prior, TSlade. Changes over time in young adults' harmful alcohol consumption: A cross-temporal meta-analysis using the AUDIT. Drug and Alcohol Dependence, Volume 214, 1 September 2020. doi.org/10.1016/j.drugalcdep.2020.108172.

Smartphones can detect when someone has drunk too much

Research published in the Journal of Studies on Alcohol and Drugs investigated whether sensors in smartphones can accurately detect when somebody is over the legal drink-drive limit. The research found that in just 10 steps, the phone sensors could detect this level of alcohol consumption in 90% of cases.

In the study, 17 participants aged 21 to 43, were given an ethanol oral dosing to achieve a goal peak BrAC .20%. They completed a walking trial at baseline and each hour for up to 7 hours following alcohol administration. Before beginning the walking trial, a smartphone was placed on the lower back using an elastic belt. Each participant then walked 10 steps in a straight line on a flat

surface, turned around and walked 10 steps back. Accelerometer data was recorded using the phyphox app (www.phyphox.org).

In 92% of walking tests the researchers were able to identify those over the limit through changes in gait highlighted by the phones. The scientists hope that the discovery can be used to develop device alerts, such as asking people not to drive while drunk.

Source: B Suffoletto, P Dasgupta, R Uymatiao, J Huber, K Flickinger, E Sejdic. A Preliminary Study Using Smartphone Accelerometers to Sense Gait Impairments Due to Alcohol Intoxication. Journal of Studies on Alcohol and Drugs, 2020; 81 (4): 505 doi.org/10.15288/jsad.2020.81.505.



Longitudinal changes in alcohol use and binge-drinking among young-adult college students in the US

A study investigating predictors of different drinking trajectories found that young-adult drinking and binge-drinking had both common and distinct predictors. Being White, male, and having early-onset substance use predicted alcohol use/misuse. Parental use and private college/rural setting were also risk factors for use/misuse. The study also found that having depressive and ADHD symptoms predicted higher risk use trajectories.

Data from 3,418 US college students (aged 18–25) in a two-year, six-wave panel study (64.6% female, 63.4% White) were used to examine alcohol use and binge-drinking trajectories, as well as predictors of differing trajectories across individual (sociodemographics, depressive symptoms, ADHD symptoms, early-onset substance use), interpersonal (adverse childhood events, social support, parental substance use), and community factors (college type, rural/urban).

Baseline alcohol use was associated with being White, higher parental education, early-onset use of alcohol, cigarettes, and marijuana, greater social support, parental alcohol use, attending private institutions, and rurality. Greater alcohol use over

time was predicted by being White and attending private institutions.

Predictors of binge-drinking at any assessment included older age, sexual minority, greater ADHD symptoms, early-onset substance use, parental alcohol use, attending private institutions, and rurality. 4 binge-drinking trajectory classes were identified: Dabblers (89.94% of the sample), Slow decelerators (7.35%), Accelerators (1.86%), and Fast decelerators (0.84%). Fast and Slow decelerators were older; Dabblers and Fast decelerators were more likely female; Accelerators reported more depressive symptoms; Dabblers were less likely early-onset substance users.

The authors comment that intervention efforts should be informed by data regarding those most likely to drink, binge-drink, and escalate use (e.g., Whites, men, early-onset users, parental use, private college students, rural).

Source: Regine Haardörfer, Michael Windle, Robert T. Fairman, Carla J. Berg Longitudinal changes in alcohol use and binge-drinking among young-adult college students: Analyses of predictors across system levels. *Addictive Behaviors* January 2021. doi.org/10.1016/j.addbeh.2020.106619.

Perceived social capital and binge drinking in older adults

Social capital has been described as having both positive influences as well as negative influences on health behaviours. A research project sought to test the association of perceived social capital on the risk of binge drinking among older adults, using a longitudinal design.

Data was drawn from HRS (Health and Retirement Study) a nationally representative sample of US adults aged ≥ 50 years evaluated every two years (from 2006 to 2014). The sample included 19,140 individuals with an average age of 66.8 (SD 10.3) at baseline. The relationship between perceived social capital (neighbourhood social cohesion and neighbourhood physical disorder, positive social support and negative social support) and binge drinking was assessed.

Over time, the number of binge drinking days decreased. Negative social support increased the average number of binge drinking days among

those who drink, where one unit increase was associated with an increase of 37% in the expected number of days binge drinking in the same wave. The association of positive social support on the number of binge drinking days was stronger for females (-0.59 (SE = 0.12)), while neighbourhood social cohesion was significantly associated with binge drinking in females (-0.05 (SE = 0.01)), but not in males.

The researchers conclude that negative social support favoured binge drinking. Positive social support and neighbourhood social cohesion are protective factors for binge drinking, especially for women.

Source: E. Villalonga-Olives, J. Almansa, F. Shaya, I. Kawachi. Perceived social capital and binge drinking in older adults: The Health and Retirement Study, US data from 2006–2014. *Drug and Alcohol Dependence*, 1 September 2020. doi.org/10.1016/j.drugalcdep.2020.108099.



Affective drinking motives, delinquency and binge drinking among high school seniors

A study explored whether the association between affective drinking motives, delinquency and binge drinking vary as a function of sex and if so, whether delinquency moderates the relationship between affective drinking motives and binge drinking in late adolescent males and females.

623 high school seniors from the 2018 Monitoring the Future study, (257 males, 366 females) were included in the study. A principal components analysis was initially performed to create component scores for the first factor of a 15-item drinking motives scale subsequently labelled affective drinking motives. These scores, along with sex and a measure of delinquency, were then entered into a three-way interaction. The interaction was found to correlate significantly with binge drinking. Because of the significant three-way interaction, analyses were performed on male and female participants separately.

Analyses conducted on male participants revealed a moderate correlation between affective drinking

motives and binge drinking but no evidence of an interaction between affective drinking motives and delinquency. Analyses performed on female participants, on the other hand, identified a significant main effect for affective drinking motives and a negative interaction between affective drinking motives and delinquency, indicating that the relationship between affective drinking motives and binge drinking was strongest when delinquency was low.

These results suggest that while delinquency had no apparent impact on the affective drinking motive-binge drinking correlation in boys, low delinquency clearly amplified the counter-binge drinking effects of low affective drinking motives in girls.

Source: Glenn D Walters, *Affective Drinking Motives, Delinquency and Binge Drinking: A Comparison of Male and Female High School Seniors, Alcohol and Alcoholism*, Volume 55, Issue 5, September 2020, Pages 571–577, doi.org/10.1093/alcalc/agaa070.

Parental alcohol-specific rules effectively reduce adolescents' tobacco and cannabis use

Research from the Netherlands suggests that the setting of strict alcohol-specific parental rules may reduce adolescent tobacco and cannabis use.

A study longitudinally examined the direct and indirect effects (via alcohol use) of parental alcohol-specific rule-setting on adolescent tobacco and cannabis use. Based on the hypothesis that alcohol use serves as a gateway for tobacco and cannabis use, the researchers expected parental alcohol-specific rules to affect adolescent tobacco and cannabis use through adolescent alcohol use.

A longitudinal study was conducted over three waves (T1-T3) involving 906 Dutch adolescents. Self-report questionnaires measured adolescents' perceived rules about alcohol at T1, cigarette use at T1 and T3 (frequency of life-time and current smoking), cannabis use at T1 and T3 (frequency of yearly and monthly use) and frequency of monthly alcohol use at T1 and T2.

Stricter alcohol-specific rules at T1 predicted lower incidence and prevalence rates of cigarette (life-time: $\beta = -0.20$; current: $\beta = -0.21$) and cannabis use (monthly: $\beta = -0.43$; yearly: $\beta = -0.28$) two years later (T3). This direct effect was no longer significant when alcohol use at T1 was controlled for. Moreover, a significant indirect effect of alcohol-specific rules at T1 on tobacco and cannabis use T3 via monthly alcohol use T2 was found.

According to the authors, these findings demonstrate that strict rules regarding alcohol may not only reduce alcohol but subsequently also other substance use such as tobacco and cannabis. Thus, interventions targeting the prevention of alcohol use, which appears to serve as a gateway, also affects the involvement in other substances.

Source: Ina Koning, Margarethade Looze, Zeena Harakeh *Parental alcohol-specific rules effectively reduce adolescents' tobacco and cannabis use: A longitudinal study.* *Drug and Alcohol Dependence*, Volume 216, 1 November 2020. doi.org/10.1016/j.drugalcdep.2020.108226.



Consumer perception and behaviour related to low-alcohol wine: do people overcompensate?

Compared with standard wines, low-alcohol wines may have several social and health benefits. Innovative production processes have led to high-quality light wines. It is, however, unclear how consumers perceive and consume these alcohol-reduced wines. A study investigated how people evaluate low-alcohol wine (Sauvignon Blanc) and whether the reduction in alcohol, and the information that a wine is low in alcohol, influences consumption.

90 Participants were invited to a wine tasting and randomised into one of the three conditions: they either tasted a 'new white wine' (12.5 % alcohol content), a 'new low-alcohol white wine' (8.0 % alcohol content) or they tasted the low-alcohol wine but were not aware that the wine was reduced in alcohol (low-alcohol, blinded).

Mean comparisons showed similar ratings for the low-alcohol conditions and the standard alcohol

condition (mean > 5.6/7). The mean consumed amount across all conditions did not differ (162 (sd 71) ml, hence people who tasted the low-alcohol wine consumed approximately 30% less alcohol. However, participants were willing to pay more for the normal wine compared with the low-alcohol wine.

Participants did not alter their drinking behaviour in response to the reduced alcohol content, and the low-alcohol wine was perceived positively. There might be an emerging market potential for wine of reduced alcohol content, but consumers may not be willing to pay the same price as for the standard wine, the study authors suggest.

Source: Bucher, T., Frey, E., Wilczynska, M., Deroover, K., & Dohle, S. (2020). Consumer perception and behaviour related to low-alcohol wine: Do people overcompensate? *Public Health Nutrition*, 23(11), 1939-1947. doi.org/10.1017/S1368980019005238.

Drinking to excess and the tipping point

Those who drink alcohol often seek to manage their intake in order to maximise the pleasurable effects, such as feelings of sociability and relaxation, without reaching their 'tipping point', where they feel out of control, or unwell. A paper published in the *International Journal of Drug Policy* aimed to explore three stages of intoxication; feeling the effects; being as drunk as you would like to be; and reaching the tipping point (feeling more drunk than you want to be) in a large international sample (The Global Drug Survey (GDS)).

61,043 respondents (63.7% male) from 21 countries who took part in GDS2015 were included. Respondents reported their usual type of drink; how many drinks they would require to reach each stage of intoxication and how frequently they reached each stage. Alongside socio-demographic measures, they also completed the Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test (AUDIT).

Male respondents reported consuming 87.55 gm to be as drunk as they want to be and female

respondents reported 70.16 gm, on average. The tipping point was reached at 138.65 gm for male respondents and 106.54 gm for female respondents. Overall 20.3% reported reaching their tipping point at least once a month. Being male, aged under 25 and at higher risk for alcohol use disorder was associated with reporting reaching the tipping point more frequently.

The researchers state that the amount of alcohol being consumed to reach a desired point of intoxication is much higher than the maximum daily, and sometimes weekly, amount recommended by country guidelines. Encouraging people to avoid reaching their tipping point may be a useful intervention point alongside better communication of low risk drinking guidelines.

Source: Emma L Davies, Richard Cooke, Larissa J Maier, Adam R Winstock, Jason A Ferris. Drinking to excess and the tipping point: An international study of alcohol intoxication in 61,000 people. *International Journal of Drug Policy*. September 2020. doi.org/10.1016/j.drugpo.2020.102867.



Why adolescents engage in early alcohol use: A study of drinking motives

Research in the Netherlands looked at the drinking motives among young adolescents shortly after they had initiated alcohol use. The study investigated whether drinking motives were associated with current alcohol use and binge drinking, (2) whether motives predicted alcohol use and binge drinking 6 months later, and (3) whether alcohol use and binge drinking alcohol predict motives 6 months later.

Data on 210 adolescents with an average age of 14 were drawn from a Dutch longitudinal 7-wave family study at the timepoint of alcohol use initiation (t0) and 6 months later (t1). Results indicated that young adolescents mainly drink for social and enhancement motives rather than coping and conformity motives. Shortly after alcohol initiation, social motives were associated with alcohol use at t0 (OR = 1.52), enhancement motives with binge drinking at t0 (OR = 2.35), and coping motives with binge drinking at t0 (OR =

2.62) and at t1 (OR = 3.00). Conformity motives were inversely associated with binge drinking at t0 (OR = 0.42). Binge drinking predicted coping motives at t1 (B = 0.71, SE = -0.35), but no other associations among alcohol use, binge drinking, and drinking motives at t1 were found.

The study indicates that young adolescents drink to enjoy parties and to get drunk (social and enhancement motives) rather than to fit in (conformity motives). The study also indicates that shortly after alcohol initiation, alcohol to cope represents a reciprocal risk factor for binge drinking that may persist in the future, thus pointing to the importance of drinking motives for drinking behaviours among young adolescents.

Source: Smit, K., Voogt, C., Otten, R., Kleinjan, M., & Kuntsche, E. (2020). Why adolescents engage in early alcohol use: A study of drinking motives. *Experimental and Clinical Psychopharmacology*. Advance online publication. doi.org/10.1037/pha0000383.

The potential effect of in-laws' history of drinking problems

New research published in the journal *Psychological Science* has uncovered a previously unrecognised family connection to AUD: the drinking habits of a person's in-laws. This study suggests that marriage to a spouse who as a child was exposed to parental alcohol misuse increases that person's likelihood of developing AUD, even if the spouse does not have a drinking disorder.

Using observational and extended-family designs, the researchers analysed marital information on more than 300,000 couples in Swedish national population registries, finding that marriage to a spouse with a predisposition toward alcohol use disorder increased risk for developing AUD. This increased risk was not explained by socioeconomic status, the spouse's AUD status, nor contact with the spouse's parents. Instead, the researchers found that, rather than genetics, this increased risk reflected the psychological consequences of the spouse having grown up with an AUD-affected parent.

"What we were able to do in our study was tease apart the effects of the social partner (spouse's) genes and the rearing environment," she said. "And when we did that, what we found surprised

us: It's something about the spouse being raised by a parent with a drinking problem, rather than the spouse's genetic makeup, that influences a person's risk for developing an alcohol problem."

The study's findings could prove valuable when it comes to treating couples struggling with alcohol. The findings reinforce the idea that interventions for substance-use disorders should be administered at the level of a couple or the family (for those who have a partner) rather than at the individual level, lead author, Jessica Salvatore said.

"In the best-case scenario, spouses can be one of our first defenses against poor health... and they're among the first to notice if we're feeling blue or tipping too many drinks back. But spouses can also be a liability for poor health," Salvatore commented. "The results from this study underscore how a spouse's experiences in his/her family of origin can be a risk factor for the development of alcohol problems."

Source: Salvatore, J. E., Larsson Lönn, S., Sundquist, J., Sundquist, K., & Kendler, K. S. (2020). Disentangling Social-Genetic From Rearing-Environment Effects for Alcohol Use Disorder Using Swedish National Data. *Psychological Science*. doi.org/10.1177/0956797620931542.



What explains the decline in adolescent binge-drinking in New Zealand?

An article to be published in the October issue of International Journal of Drug Policy states that binge-drinking prevalence among New Zealand adolescents has declined sharply since 2001, as it has in many other high-income countries. Other adolescent risk behaviours (e.g. smoking, cannabis use and precocious sexual activity) have also declined, raising the possibility of common underlying drivers. A study led by Jude Ball at the University of Otago, Wellington, investigated potential contributing factors – both factors that predict risk behaviours in general, and alcohol-specific factors – and the extent to which they account for the decline in binge drinking.

The study used nationally representative survey data collected in 2001, 2007 and 2012, with around 6,500 participants at baseline. Predictor variables included factors that predict risk behaviours in general (parental monitoring, family attachment, school attachment, having a part-time job, time spent hanging out with friends); alcohol-specific factors (parental alcohol use, adolescent attitude toward alcohol use); and attitude toward and current use of tobacco and cannabis. Likelihood of

binge drinking was modelled for each survey year (ref=2001), adjusting for demographic factors, taking into account predictors.

Compared with 2001 the odds of binge-drinking in 2012 were 0.33. The strongest independent contributor to the decline was adolescent attitude toward alcohol use, followed by current cannabis use, then current tobacco use. Collectively, general factors in home, school and leisure settings did not significantly contribute to the downward trend in binge drinking.

The decreasing acceptability of alcohol use among adolescents was the most important identified contributor to adolescent binge-drinking decline. Drinking, smoking and cannabis use trends were empirically linked, yet the decline in binge drinking was not significantly explained by the included predictors common to risk behaviours in general.

Source: Ball, Jude; Edwards, Richard; Sim, Dalice; Cook, Hera; Denny, Simon What explains the decline in adolescent binge-drinking in New Zealand? International Journal of Drug Policy doi.org/10.1016/j.drugpo.2020.102826

Reported road casualties in Great Britain: final estimates involving illegal alcohol levels: 2018

Final estimates of casualties in accidents involving at least one driver or rider over the drink-drive limit in Great Britain for 2018 show that between 220 and 260 people were killed in drink drive accidents, with a central estimate of 240 fatalities. The final estimate of fatalities for 2018 is similar to levels seen since 2010, however, the fall from 250 in 2017 is not statistically significant.

An estimated 8,680 people were killed or injured in drink drive accidents. This represents an increase of 1% from 8,600 in 2017, but is still 4% lower than the level in 2016. The total number of accidents where at least one driver or rider was over the alcohol limit rose by 3% to 5,890 compared to 2017, but is 3% lower than the level in 2016.

In 2018, 80% of drink-drive accidents involved male drivers/riders over the legal alcohol limit. Males make up 66% of casualties and females 34% in drink-drive accidents. 63% of casualties in drink-drive accidents are aged 25-59 (compared to 58% of casualties in all accidents). People aged 16-24 represent 24% of drink-drive casualties (compared to 20% of all casualties). The respective figures for older people (aged 60 or more) are 8% and 14%. For children (aged 0-15) the figures are 4% and 6%. assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/912948/drink-drive-final-estimates-2018.pdf

Chart 8: Drink-drive fatalities, casualties and accidents: GB, 2018

	Drink-drive fatalities	All drink-drive casualties	All drink-drive accidents
Number in 2018	240	8,680	5,890
Change since 2017	6% ns	1%	3%
Change compared to 2010	0.4% ns	10%	11%
As a proportion of all fatalities/casualties/accidents	13% of all fatalities	5% of all casualties	5% of all accidents

ASA find high adherence to age restricted advertising rules by alcohol brands

The Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) has committed to publicly identify age-restricted adverts appearing in children’s media, as well as the compliance action taken against repeat offenders and to share this with relevant industry groups. In the first of four quarterly monitoring reports, the ASA highlight 159 age-restricted ads that broke the advertising rules.

Advertisers placing age-restricted adverts online are required, under the advertising code, to target their ads away from child audiences. However, over a three-month period the ASA identified a number of instances where the ad rules were broken. The watchdog used monitoring tools to capture adverts served on a sample of more than 50 websites and YouTube channels attracting a disproportionately high child audiences.

In first monitoring period, ASA prioritised identifying and tackling online ads for gambling, alcohol, e-cigarettes and tobacco, slimming and weight control products, as well as food and soft

drinks high in fat, salt or sugar (HFSS). The study found 159 age-restricted adverts that broke the advertising rules, with 35 advertisers placing age-restricted adverts on 34 websites and five YouTube channels aimed at or attracting a disproportionately large child audience.

Adverts for HFSS brands were the biggest offenders with 78 different ads from 29 advertisers appeared on 24 websites and five YouTube channels. This was followed by gambling, which had 70 different betting adverts from four gambling operators appearing across eight websites. Alcohol and smoking brands were less likely to accidentally target children. The ASA found different alcohol adverts from a single brand appeared on one website and one e-cigarette ad appeared on one website.

The ASA is taking follow-up action with the advertisers to secure the removal of the problem adverts; and to review and amend their practices to ensure they target future adverts responsibly.

UK alcohol producers clear industry regulatory hurdles

The Portman Group has independently audited the alcohol market to assess the industry’s compliance with the latest edition of the Code of Practice on the Naming, Packaging and Promotion of Alcoholic Drinks. The Code is now in its sixth edition. An update was launched last year, in response to changes in society and expectations of the industry; it introduced new guidance to protect the vulnerable and rules that outlawed marketing considered to cause serious or widespread offence. Other changes included a new definition of immoderate consumption and tightening of the rules surrounding links to illegal behaviour and suggestions of mind-altering qualities.

Independent auditors and the Independent Complaints Panel’s decisions show 95% adherence to regulatory standards. The previous audit took place in 2012 showing 92% compliance.

The independent audit carried out by Zenith Global, sampled 500 products and assessed them against the updated Code. 29 were flagged for potentially breaching the code. The rule most likely to be breached was the stipulation that products, promotions and packaging must not appeal to under 18s. 20.7% of flagged products

were deemed to risk breaching this rule; with 17.2% of products breaking the rules regarding placing undue emphasis on alcoholic strength and association with violence, bravado and illegal behaviour.

Beer accounted for 60% of flagged products and 67% of products that were highlighted for potentially breaking the Code were produced overseas, underscoring the need for importers to consider how products adhere to the UK regulation.

Ultimately, just nine products progressed to the Independent Complaints Panel (ICP). Three of the products were found not to be in breach while the remaining six products breached the Code. Most producers took voluntary action to withdraw or amend their packaging.

portmangroup.org.uk/shaken-not-stirred-alcohol-producers-clear-industry-regulatory-hurdles/

Independent Audit of the Alcohol Industry’s Delivery of the Portman Group’s Code



Portman Group report on consumption levels in the UK as pubs reopen

Lockdown in the UK was predicted to cause a sharp rise in alcohol consumption and binge-drinking but according to earlier research from the Portman Group, most UK drinkers (65%) actually drank the same, less or stopped drinking altogether during lockdown compared to previously. In the weeks following the reopening of the hospitality sector, this trend has continued. Brits are continuing to drink in moderation and 42% of adults in England have visited a pub following the reopening of hospitality on 4 July.

The latest YouGov survey commissioned by the Portman Group (2,296 UK adults, 12-13 August) found that, of those who drink alcohol, even more people are drinking the same, less, or have cut out alcohol altogether, than during lockdown. These figures have now increased from 65% (May 2020) to 88%. This shows an ongoing trend of people drinking less during this unprecedented time and supports data by Nielsen which showed that in the 17-week period covering lockdown to 11 July 2020 Brits consumed almost 1.3bn litres of alcohol during the UK's lockdown period, almost half the 2bn litres consumed in the same period last year.

Any initial suggestion that people were beginning to drink more has not lasted.

- 88% of UK drinkers are drinking the same (54%), less (26%) or have cut alcohol out altogether (7%) since the hospitality sector reopened compared to before lockdown.

- 8% of drinkers said they were drinking more since the hospitality sector reopened than before lockdown.
- 66% of UK drinkers continue to drink responsibly, within the Chief Medical Officer guidelines of 14 units per week. Weekly intakes remain similar to before lockdown.

Since pubs reopened, 42% have visited at least once. This is in comparison to 26% of adults in Northern Ireland who haven't visited once. Pubs reopened later in Scotland (15 July) and Wales (3 August), which may be why locals appear to have been more cautious to return. Since reopening, just 37% of Welsh adults and 30% of Scottish adults have revisited pubs.

Gen-Z, the youngest generation (18-24) are the most likely to have visited pubs and bars since they reopened, with 51% visiting at least once, whilst the older generation are most likely to avoid pubs and bars, with 64% of those aged over 45 not having visited pubs and bars since they reopened.

Speaking about the results of the survey, John Timothy, CEO of the Portman Group, commented that "the British public are showing continued moderation both at home and, happily, now back at the pub. It's great to see people supporting their community pubs while drinking sensibly and maintaining social distancing".

portmangroup.org.uk/english-lead-the-return-to-the-pub-while-gen-z-move-from-generation-sober-to-generation-congregate/

Alcohol Awareness Week 2020

Alcohol Change UK have announced Alcohol Awareness Week (AAW) 2020 will take place from 16-22 November on the theme of alcohol and mental health. Alcohol Awareness Week is an opportunity for charities, local authorities, GP surgeries, businesses and more to think and talk about alcohol harm with their communities.

Alcohol Change UK comment that "Around 1 in 4 people in the UK experience a mental health problem each year and drinking too much or too often can increase our risk. But many of us are unaware of the link between alcohol and poor mental health and it's often the first thing we turn to when we're feeling low, stressed, worried or unable to cope.

Yet drinking too much or too often can mask or enhance underlying mental health problems - such as anxiety and depression - and prevent them from being properly addressed."

To help parties run Alcohol Awareness Week in their community, Alcohol Change UK provide a guide alongside a set of free digital resources. Resources including posters, fact sheets, social media images and suggested post for social media.

alcoholchange.org.uk/get-involved/campaigns/alcohol-awareness-week-1



The distribution and consumption of counterfeit alcohol in the UK

In a study funded by Alcohol Change UK, researchers from the University of Manchester investigated the social factors that influence counterfeit alcohol distribution and consumption and explored the distribution mechanisms of counterfeit alcohol.

Using a criminological perspective, the researchers analysed case files of counterfeit alcohol incidents. They found there was a lack of interest and follow-up investigation by regulators, perhaps due to the difficult nature of follow-up for a problem that is not perceived to be significant. There are major intelligence gaps in terms of understanding where and how large quantities of counterfeit alcohol are produced unnoticed, making enforcement actors reliant on retracing the transaction and distribution chains following seizures. The researchers also interviewed potential purchasers of counterfeit alcohol to discover their motivations and other stakeholders. Finally, they searched for online outlets of counterfeit alcohol to understand the extent of distribution channels.

The study findings include:

- Cheaper brands, and 'own brand' vodka appear to be the most vulnerable to counterfeiting. One Trading Standards officer expected luxury brands to be more vulnerable, however, there is no indication of this from the data.
- Trading Standards officers appear to rely on intelligence in cases of counterfeit alcohol or on a consumer complaint. There is no case we found where counterfeit alcohol was discovered through normal routine regulatory visits to retailers.

- The distribution of counterfeit alcohol has a very opaque supply chain and it is challenging for Trading Standards officers to trace back more than one step. This hinders prosecution and makes the understanding of distribution networks more challenging.
- The opaqueness of distribution networks makes investigating the production networks even more challenging owing to lack of the visibility of supply chain networks.
- The successful distribution of counterfeit alcohol relies, in part, on its integration into the market as 'legitimate' product. The 'branding' of the counterfeit product as a 'known' brand appears to induce consumer confidence in the product.
- There are certain activities that provide a cover for illicit distribution. The use of legitimate delivery networks, for example, delivery vans and other legitimate traders, such as taxis, are an aid to concealing distribution. There are many other forms of legitimate delivery service that could be utilised for the distribution of counterfeit alcohol. These distribution methods make it complex to trace the supply chain back from the point of delivery.
- Recent cut backs to Local Authority funding have impacted on the capacity of Trading Standards Offices to investigate activities other than those which receive a high priority. This can make the distribution of counterfeit alcohol less risky for those engaged in this activity.

alcoholchange.org.uk/blog/2020/counterfeit-alcohol-getting-to-grips-with-fake-booze

Norway national alcohol strategy

Work on a national alcohol strategy is under way in Norway.

Norway has endorsed the goal of reducing harmful alcohol consumption by ten per cent by 2025. Actis, Norwegian Policy Network on Alcohol and Drugs, has commented that if it is going to succeed, the alcohol strategy that is being prepared must contain concrete and binding goals.

A recent study from the National Institute of Public Health shows that the majority of 15-16-year-olds refrain from drinking alcohol. They experience less drinking pressure. Also, among adults, there is an increased demand for beverages without or with a low alcohol content, called the NoLo trend. Actis argue that is a development that must be supported. The alcohol strategy must facilitate non-alcoholic choices and increase acceptance of not drinking.



In Ireland, deadline to separate out alcohol products in shops approaches

In Ireland, a 12 November deadline has been set for retailers to adhere to the separation requirements from the Public Health (Alcohol) Bill.

The minister for Health, Stephen Donnelly, has said there will be no extension to the deadline for retailers to separate out alcohol products in their shops, and no plans to provide financial assistance to support them in complying with the regulations. In response to a parliamentary question from Fianna Fáil's John McGuinness, he said: "As the provision was commenced in 2018 an extension cannot now be given. There are no plans to provide financial assistance to retailers to comply with the legislation".

Smaller retailers have complained at the lack of consultation from the Department of Health on how they should implement this provision. Vincent Jennings, the CEO of the Convenience Stores & Newsagents Association (CSNA), commented: "Members are about to embark on extensive and expensive changes to their store. They're not sure if they're safe and will pass health and safety tests, what their situation will be with insurance, and if they'll meet the requirements. We need to know literally what we need to order. The lead in time is close... we still don't know. It's the 11th hour".

According to guidance released by the government for retailers last year, retailers can continue to display alcohol products behind the counter at only one point.

They can also display and advertise alcohol using one of three options:

1. A separate area of the shop separated by a physical barrier with a minimum height of 1.2 metres. Alcohol and advertisements for alcohol should not be visible through this barrier.
2. Enclosed adjacent storage units in which products are not visible up to a minimum height of 1.5 metres, or
3. A maximum of three adjacent units, each of one-metre width and 2.2 metres high.

The overall aim of the legislation is to reduce the harm from alcohol on the general public and the government said the specific objective from separating alcohol from other products in shops has a number of objectives. It said in its guidance to retailers: "Alcohol products are less likely to be on display near grocery products, thereby discouraging their purchase as part of everyday household grocery shopping; [and] alcohol products will be less visible to children."

Jennings said he and other retailers had no issue with the public health intent of the legislation and the rules as they apply to retailers, but that they do have an issue with the lack of consultation from the government on the matter, and lack of clarity on what such a barrier should look like. While he is seeking more consultation, Minister Stephen Donnelly has ruled out an extension to the current deadline for these to be implemented.

UK's overall consumption of alcohol halved during lockdown

Data from Nielsen Scantrack and the CGA suggests that the overall UK consumption of alcohol halved during lockdown, despite steep sales increases through the supermarkets.

In the 17 weeks to 11 July 2020, the total volume of alcohol sold during lockdown fell to 1.3bn litres, down from 2bn the previous year, despite value sales through the major retailers rising £1.9bn over the same period.

Although supermarket alcohol sales during the four month period hit £7.7bn, the overall volume of alcohol bought in the UK was far lower than last year, despite the increase in value.

According to Nielsen's senior client business partner, Gemma Cooper, around 46% of alcohol sold in the UK was sold through the on-trade and

although spend had undoubtedly shifted to the off-trade, it was not enough to make up for the shortfall.

Beer value sales in the 17 week period were up £737m on the same period last year to a total of £2.2bn. Cider also increased, up 48% to £537m. Wine saw gains of £516m on last year's figure, rising to £2.4bn although the value of Champagne sales fell by £9m. Spirit sales were also strong, around £450m higher than last year, to a total of £1.9bn.

Cooper commented that UK consumers had been trading up and treating themselves, as seen by the increase in wine sold in the £5 -£7 bracket (which now accounting for 53% of the market) and £7- £9 brackets (rising to 11% market share from only 8% last year).



Drinkaware in Ireland calls for public consultation and collective campaign on the low-risk drinking guidelines

In Ireland, the Health Research Board (HRB) study, *Drinking in Denial*, was published in the *BMJ* in July. The report looked at factors associated with the public's self-perception of their own drinking and finds that there is little awareness of the low risk drinking guidelines amongst the drinking population. The HRB report authors conclude that this lack of knowledge is a factor in people's misconception of their harmful drinking, something which Drinkaware say has been borne out consistently by their Barometer reports (2018, 2019, 2020). Drinkaware are calling for an open and public consultation on the Low Risk Weekly Guidelines be considered.

Drinkaware say that the Drinkaware Index (2019) critically showed that hazardous drinkers are open to positively changing their behaviour: 39% recognised that they would have health problems if they continued to drink in the current manner; 44% said they had already started to cut down on their drinking and 26% said they were changing their drinking habits currently. Furthermore the metrics of Drinkaware's public awareness campaigns on the official HSE public health messaging on standard drinks and low-risk guidelines, show that people are actively seeking this out information and advice through their website and online tools such as the unit calculator. The Drinkaware Index also quantified for the first time how, as a society, the Irish are aware and accepting of their harmful drinking culture (74% of adults believe that drinking to excess is 'just a part of Irish culture'). This suggests disassociation of one's own behaviour, as opposed to outright denial. Drinkaware argue that there is a need to break the deep-rooted association of drinking with celebrating, commiserating and coping, and elevate people's understanding of risk and harm. Because as the HRB study, the Drinkaware Index and successive Drinkaware Annual Barometers have shown, people are clearly unaware of what 'low risk' is and therefore potentially and unintentionally, drink in a harmful manner.

The study notes that messaging and awareness alone will not shift harmful drinking behaviour. Knowledge is an important first part of the journey, but people also need practical support. The HRB also highlights the prevalence of often-cognisant misuse amongst young Irish men. This mirrors one of the key findings in the Drinkaware Index which prompted the Change the Trend campaign aimed at men under 35, which Drinkaware has been running since last year. Men continuously over index in alcohol related harms and more needs to be done to redress this.

Drinkaware comments that the Public Health Alcohol Act is landmark legislation that can be leveraged to address alcohol misuse, but as the HRB research flags, there is also a need to fast track awareness of what constitutes low-risk drinking. As per the evidence and best practice, a collective approach to public health messaging that will amplify the reach and the resonance with the public, is what's required. Drinkaware is therefore calling for an urgent collective rethink on how to talk about harmful drinking, involving all who work to reduce alcohol misuse and harm, i.e. government, healthcare, researchers, charities. Questions include: Do we need low-risk daily limits? What guidelines will resonate with the public? Is the current language – moderate drinking, responsible drinking, binge drinking - ambiguous to the point of being counterproductive? Drinkaware suggests that an open and public consultation on the Low Risk Weekly Guidelines should be considered. Public views on the guidelines were canvassed in their Alcohol & Covid Barometer (2020).

The organisation says that they welcome further discussions on this, and are calling on the new government and all health stakeholders and communities to work together to promote and embed improved levels health literacy regarding alcohol consumption, to ultimately deliver what is a common goal of an Ireland where alcohol is not misused.

bmjopen.bmj.com/content/10/7/e034520



NIH updates comprehensive resource to address college drinking

Developed by the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, part of the National Institutes of Health, the College AIM (Alcohol Intervention Matrix) guide and website were first launched in 2015. The resource has provided research-based information to help college officials address harmful and under age student drinking by identifying effective alcohol interventions. CollegeAIM has now been updated to include revised ratings based on new research findings published since its original release.

The resource compares and rates individual- and environmental-level interventions that have been evaluated in preventing and reducing harmful and under age student drinking. Environmental-level strategies target the campus community and student population as a whole; while individual-level strategies focus on individual students, including those in higher risk groups such as first-year students, student-athletes, and members of Greek organizations. The interventions are rated

based on effectiveness, anticipated costs and barriers to implementation, as well as other factors. Its centrepiece remains a comprehensive and easy-to-use matrix-based tool to inform college staff about these evidence-based interventions.

In the current update, 7 interventions were added to the nearly 60 interventions already included. Also, some interventions have received updated ratings of their effectiveness.

George Koob, Ph.D., NIAAA director commented "Reducing harmful and under age drinking is an essential part of an overall strategy to protect the college community from COVID-19 and should continue to be a priority of college administrators long after the pandemic recedes... It's important that CollegeAIM stay current with the latest findings on alcohol interventions, so college officials have the best chance to improve the health and safety of their students."

collegedrinkingprevention.gov

TTB warns of 'increasing number' of health claims in wine ads

The US Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau (TTB) has issued a reminder of its regulations after seeing an "increasing number" of health claims in alcohol advertising. In its newsletter dated 14 August, the TTB included a section on regulations associated with attributing health claims to drinking alcohol.

"We have found an increasing number of alcohol beverage advertisements, including company websites and social media accounts, depicting health-related statements that suggest a relationship between the consumption of an alcohol beverage and its purported health benefits or effects," the statement read.

"We remind industry members that the TTB advertising regulations prohibit any health-related statement that is untrue in any particular or tends to create a misleading impression as to the effects of consumption on health."

Such regulations do not apply to wine-type products with an ABV of less than 7%. In relation to wine over 7% ABV, the regulations define a health-related statement as any wording "related to health and includes statements of a curative or

therapeutic nature that, expressly or by implication, suggest a relationship between the consumption of alcohol, wine, or any substance found within the wine, and health benefits or effects on health". Any specific health claims made in advertising require substantiation and qualification by scientific and medical evidence.

It follows much debate and controversy over the term 'clean wine'. Used by Cameron Diaz's new wine, Avaline, as well as other start-ups, the term 'clean wine' or derivatives make claims such as "free of yucky stuff like synthetic pesticides and chemical additives", or allege that their wine 'pairs well with a healthy lifestyle', for example. It has been argued that these claims are misleading as the industry is heavily-regulated and additives are thoroughly-tested before use, plus more efficient modern winemaking and the trend for minimal intervention contribute to a reduction in additions.

The TTB offers a free advertising review service for its member to see whether advertising conforms to the guidelines.



Beer Institute and Brewers Association respond to Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee

In August, the Beer Institute and the Brewers Association filed written comments with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) highlighting numerous scientific and procedural issues that undermine the Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee's recommendation to halve the moderate alcohol consumption guidelines for men.

"For three decades, the Dietary Guidelines for Americans have defined moderate alcohol consumption as up to one drink per day for women and up to two drinks per day for men. The preponderance of the evidence the Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee reviewed supported, at a minimum, maintaining this standard," said Jim McGreevy, president and CEO of the Beer Institute. "Suddenly changing the moderate consumption alcohol guidelines without a sound scientific basis will only create confusion for policymakers, healthcare professionals, and consumers."

"Basing the Dietary Guidelines in sound science will mean Americans can trust the recommendations for how they should continue to enjoy alcohol in

moderation if they choose to drink," said Bob Pease, president and CEO of the Brewers Association.

The joint comments point to several instances where the Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee acted outside the parameters set forth by the USDA to follow the National Academy of Sciences' standard for scientific review. These examples included placing unwarranted reliance on out-of-scope studies, failing to meet the committee charter's standards for transparency, and providing ungraded new science as justification to change the current moderate consumption guideline for alcohol consumption.

The comments also propose common sense recommendations for the final Dietary Guidelines that are supported by sound science: Maintain the current moderate alcohol consumption guidelines; advise adults who are 21-years old and older to talk to a trusted healthcare professional about concerns about alcohol consumption; urge adults to know the differences between the types, sizes, and alcohol content of alcohol beverages they consume; and encourage people to consume food and stay hydrated while drinking alcohol.

Why low and alcohol free beers could be considered health drinks

In a contribution to The Conversation, colleagues from Aston University state that as research shows that moderate beer intake, as with wine, is associated with a reduced risks of heart disease, it is plausible that nolo beers could also offer these health and nutritional benefits, but without the negative effects linked to the alcohol and calorie content".

In a recent review, published in the journal Beverages, the researchers set out to determine the health benefits of nolo beers and whether they could find a place as nutritious drinks with everyday uses, rather than being drunk typically

only by teetotalers and designated drivers. Antioxidants and gut health are areas about which there is considerable interest among the health-conscious and among food producers, and nolo beers can provide for both.

theconversation.com/why-low-and-alcohol-free-beers-could-be-considered-health-drinks-138640

Original source: Mellor, D.D.; Hanna-Khalil, B.; Carson, R. A Review of the Potential Health Benefits of Low Alcohol and Alcohol-Free Beer: Effects of Ingredients and Craft Brewing Processes on Potentially Bioactive Metabolites. *Beverages* 2020, 6, 25.

Minimum age for drinking in the US

Zachary Siegel looks at the history of the debate around a minimum age for drinking in the US and questions whether this focus on youth drinking is misplaced. He argues that at a time when US youth are drinking less than before and appear to be extra risk-averse and when alcohol-related deaths have doubled from 1999 to 2017, driven

largely by older drinkers, the focus on numerical age misses the requirement for much needed education about alcohol to address older-age drinking. Siegel suggests that adults are busy trying to control youth drinking while having lost control of their own drinking!

filtermag.org/21-drinking-age-america/



Declining alcohol and cigarette use in New Zealand youth



In New Zealand, cigarette smoking is now rare in high school students, and binge drinking has declined since 2012 according to the latest findings from the Youth19 Rangatahi smart study, part of the Youth2000 survey series, which has been running since 2001.

Less than 3% of high school aged students report smoking cigarettes weekly or more often, a decline from 5% in 2012. Binge drinking has declined but remains more prevalent, with one in five students reporting binge drinking in the past month.

Weekly marijuana use is consistent with previous years' findings, and vaping has emerged as a new issue.

Associate Professor Terryann Clark from the University of Auckland, co-lead on the study, says these results are really encouraging, but it should be noted that there are still ethnic and socioeconomic disparities in terms of harm from these substances.

Binge drinking was equally common across all school deciles, with students from higher income

communities more likely to report binge drinking. Binge drinking was also more common among older students and those living in rural areas and small towns compared with urban areas.

Study co-author Dr Jude Ball, from the University of Otago, says the evidence shows that young people are starting to drink at an older age, which could be contributing to the decline.

The study found that binge drinking is now relatively uncommon in younger adolescents, but among those aged 17 or older, 42% reported binge drinking in the past month.

Weekly marijuana use amongst students is lower than in 2001 but has not changed significantly since 2012. Vaping has emerged as a new issue, with 12% of secondary school students reporting vaping monthly, and 8% weekly. Weekly vaping was more common among higher income communities.

Dr Theresa Fleming from the University's Faculty of Health and co-lead on the study says that these findings show that it is possible to improve health and well being among young people in important ways. "Reduced drinking and substance use will have long-term benefits. We should learn from and build on these gains," she says.

For more information see www.youth19.ac.nz

Diageo: Conclusion of its 2020 Sustainability and Responsibility Goals

Originally set in 2008, Diageo's 2020 Sustainability and Responsibility Goals sought to reduce the company's impact on the environment in addition to encouraging responsible drinking.

The goals were implemented over a five-year period between 2015 and 2020, with greenhouse gas emissions reduced by 509,000 metric tonnes in the period - 50% of the company's emissions. Over 99.5% of Diageo packaging is now fully recyclable, the company said, while the company has replenished 100% of the water it uses in water-stressed areas. Furthermore, Diageo has reduced its water use by 46% through increased water efficiency, albeit this was slightly below the company's target of 50%.

The company also set out to encourage responsible drinking as part of its goals and successfully reached 229.2 million with messages about drinking in moderation over the five-year period, has educated 1 million young people, parents and teachers about the dangers of under age drinking and has collected more than 25 million pledges never to drink and drive through #JoinThePact.

Diageo says it supports the World Health Organization's goal of reducing harmful drinking around the world by 10% by 2025.

[diageo.com/PR1346/aws/media/11300/our-performance-against-2020-sustainability-targets.pdf](https://www.diageo.com/PR1346/aws/media/11300/our-performance-against-2020-sustainability-targets.pdf)

Many nations falling behind on global efforts to cut chronic disease deaths

Many countries are falling behind on global commitments to cut premature deaths from chronic diseases such as diabetes, lung cancer and heart disease, according to the 2nd global review of international efforts to reduce the risk of people dying prematurely from chronic diseases – collectively termed ‘non-communicable diseases’ or NCDs.

Published in *The Lancet*, the NCD Countdown 2030 report was led by researchers at Imperial College London, World Health Organization and the NCD Alliance. The report reveals that around the world, the risk of dying prematurely from often preventable and largely treatable chronic diseases such as stroke, heart disease, and stomach cancer has declined steadily over the past decade. But death rates from other chronic diseases, such as diabetes, lung cancer, colon cancer, and liver cancer are declining too slowly or worsening in many countries. The United States, China and the United Kingdom are among a number of nations falling behind on global targets to cut premature deaths.

According to the researchers, the internationally agreed target to cut premature deaths from NCDs

by one third by 2030 is still achievable, but many countries are falling short, and the added impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is severely disrupting health services’ ability to deliver regular screening, diagnosis, treatment and prevention.

The researchers recommend a raft of measures and state that tobacco and alcohol control and effective health-system interventions will reduce NCD causes of death necessary to achieve SDG target 3.4 in most countries.

Professor Majid Ezzati, from Imperial’s School of Public Health, who led the study, said: “No country can reach that target by simply addressing a single disease – what is needed is a package of measures, a strong health system, which addresses prevention, early detection and treatment, tailored to the national situation.”

The report was published ahead of the Global Week of Action on NCDs, 7 - 13 September 2020.

imperial.ac.uk/news/203373/many-nations-falling-behind-global-efforts/

Source: NCD Countdown 2030: pathways to achieving Sustainable Development Goal target 3.4, NCD Countdown 2030 collaborators. *Lancet*, published September 03, 2020. [doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(20\)31761-X](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(20)31761-X)

Annual Alcohol Poll 2020 in Australia: Alcohol is consumed more often at home – even before COVID-19 lockdowns

The Annual Alcohol Poll 2020: Behaviours and Attitudes (the Poll) found that the home is where the majority of Australian drinkers consume the largest quantity per occasion and drink most frequently, rather than at pubs, clubs or restaurants.

The Poll by YouGov Galaxy, for the Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE), was conducted in January/February just before the COVID-19 lockdown measures were introduced. FARE CEO Caterina Giorgi says drinking in the home is a long-standing trend that has since intensified. “Despite what many of us assume, people who drink alcohol are more likely to do so at home – and this is true even before the lockdown measures. This is the case whether people are younger or older, women or men, or living in major cities or regional areas,” Ms Giorgi said.

The Poll found that 67% of Australians who drink alcohol had the largest quantity on one occasion in the past 12 months in the home, which is also where the majority 73% drink most frequently.

The pattern is consistent across generations with 60% of 18 to 24-year-olds drinking the most on one occasion at home, as well as 77% of people 50 and older. 80% of people 50 and older and 62% of 18 to 24-year-olds drink most frequently at home, women were more likely to than men (75% v 71%) and those in regional areas were more likely to than those in major cities (80% v 71%).

The Poll also examined alcohol retail online and found that of people who had ordered alcohol online in the past year, 23% had alcohol delivered at least weekly and 44% had alcohol delivered within two hours. Of the people who had online retailers deliver within two hours 70% drank more than four standard drinks that day, while 38% drank 11 or more standard drinks that day.

The Poll found online alcohol retailers were not routinely checking ID, with only 38% of people indicating their ID was checked on delivery and 25% saying the alcohol was left unattended.

fare.org.au/wp-content/uploads/ALCPOLL-2020.pdf



The role of alcohol-free and low-strength drinks in reducing alcohol-related harms

A report from the Social Marketing Foundation, sponsored by Alcohol Change UK examines recent trends in the market for alcohol-free and low-strength beers, ciders, wines and spirits – “NoLo drinks” - in the UK, the demographics of consumers that are drinking them and the potential impacts on health outcomes. In addition, the report considers the regulation of NoLo drinks in the UK and how this differs from other markets. The research draws on desk research, a consumer survey commissioned from Opinium and interviews with a range of stakeholders in industry and the public health space.

Evidence presented in the report finds that whilst NoLo products may help individuals reduce their consumption, NoLo drinks are unlikely to produce the aggregate level reductions in alcohol-related harms public health experts would desire.

NoLo products comprises a small but increasingly significant part of the alcoholic drinks market and were identified by the UK government as a way of reducing alcohol-related harms in the 2019 Prevention Green Paper. However, the evidence base for how NoLo products – and the growth in the market – might impact health outcomes remains limited.

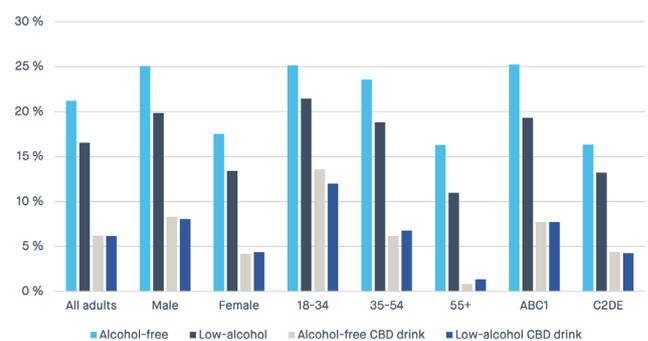
Key findings include:

- Although the market for NoLo drinks was worth around £110 million in 2018/19 – this comprises just 0.2% of the total market for alcoholic drinks in that year. The report estimates that the annual sales growth of NoLo drinks would have to exceed over 40% per annum for market share to stand above 10% by 2030.
- In a survey commissioned specially for this study, 21% of respondents had consumed an alcohol-free beer, cider, wine or spirit in the last year. Including low-strength drinks (up to 1.2% alcohol content), this rises to 27%. Young people and those in higher income socioeconomic groups were more likely to have tried a NoLo product.
- The regulation of the NoLo market – Guidance and ABV descriptors issued by the Department of Health and Social Care contains elements of ambiguity and are often out of step with other European countries.

- Press coverage of NoLo drinks typically centres on the “new sensibility” of younger people and NoLo as a “community” or “movement”. Some producers have promoted their NoLo products as substitutes for stronger products, whilst others market them as additional to existing drinks on the market.
- Survey results in this report indicate that among those that have consumed NoLo drinks over the past 12 months, about 4 in 10 have cut back on their alcohol consumption. However, a similar number reported no change. A significant proportion of consumers of NoLo also indicated that they do so on top of, rather than instead of, stronger products. This raises concerns about how NoLo products can tackle alcohol-related harms at the population level.
- Whilst the Government has indicated that NoLo products will be key to reducing alcohol-related harm, this report cautions that NoLo drinks must form part of a much wider harm prevention strategy. Government should also consider reforming ABV descriptors for NoLo and legislate to protect against alibi marketing.

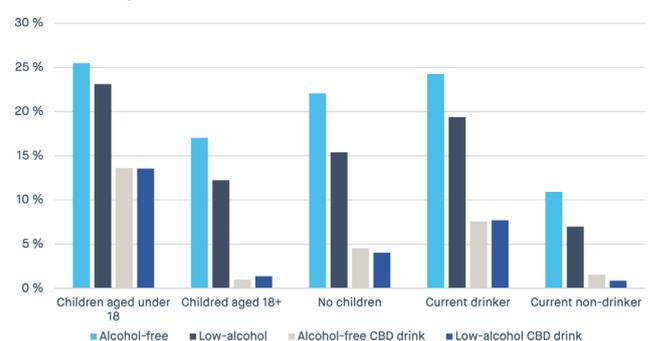
smf.co.uk/publications/no-low-alcohol-harms/

Figure 4: % of individuals that have consumed a NoLo drink in the past 12 months, by sex, age and socioeconomic group



Source: Opinium nationally representative survey. Alcohol-free defined as 0.5% ABV or less. Low-alcohol defined as 0.6% to 1.2% ABV.

Figure 5: % of individuals that have consumed a NoLo drink in the past 12 months, by whether has children and current drinking status



Source: Opinium nationally representative survey. Alcohol-free defined as 0.5% ABV or less. Low-alcohol defined as 0.6% to 1.2% ABV.



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

AIM Mission Statement

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

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