

SHAAP

SCOTTISH HEALTH ACTION ON ALCOHOL PROBLEMS
www.shaap.org.uk

Welcome to SHAAP's weekly media monitoring service: 5 November – 12 November 2020

Asylum seekers turning to drink amid lengthy waits over claims, study suggests

<https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/national-news/18858988.asylum-seekers-turning-drink-amid-lengthy-waits-claims-study-suggests/>

A new study examining alcohol use by asylum seekers has found long waiting times for claims to be determined, together with social isolation and poverty, can contribute to problem drinking. It is a key finding in a report for the group Scottish Health Action on Alcohol Problems (SHAAP), which looked at the drinking habits of 20 refugees and asylum seekers in Scotland and the north of England. Of the respondents, 18 were described as being destitute when interviews were carried out. The report, by Dr Fiona Cuthill and Dr Steph Grohmann from the University of Edinburgh, found *“the main cause of harmful alcohol use in this population is the long duration and uncertain outcome of the UK asylum process”*. [...]

Source: The Herald, 10 November 2020

[SHAAP Report: <https://www.shaap.org.uk/downloads/reports-and-briefings/290-refugees-experiences-of-harmful-alcohol-use-report.html>]

‘Pocket-money priced alcohol’ causing ‘colossal harm’ to nation, study warns

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/health/health-research-alcohol-study-government-b1719740.html>

“Pocket money-priced” alcohol is to blame for “colossal” harm on the nation, doctors have warned after new research showed people can buy an entire week's worth of alcohol for the price of a takeaway coffee [in England]. The analysis by the Alcohol Health Alliance UK said that it is possible to buy 14 units of alcohol for a meagre £2.68 – the price of a coffee in most major high street chains. It is not advised that anyone should drink more than 14 units a week on a regular basis. The Alliance team behind the research, a coalition of more than 50 organisations that include medical royal colleges and health charities, are calling on ministers to intervene and tackle cheap, high-strength alcohol. [...]

Source: Independent, 10 November 2020

[Alcohol Health Alliance UK Report: <https://ahauk.org/small-change-alcohol-at-pocket-money-prices-aha-pricing-survey-2020/>]

Coca-Cola launches new fruit-flavoured 'alcoholic water' in UK which experts claim has 'reinvented alcopops' and is 'stronger than an average beer'

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-8924943/Coca-Cola-launches-new-fruit-flavoured-alcoholic-water-UK-stronger-beer.html>

Health experts have accused Coca-Cola of 'reinventing alcopops' with a brand of fruit- flavoured sparkling water laced with alcohol. Following a slump in sales of some of its most popular drinks, the firm will this month launch Topo Chico hard seltzer in Britain. The 'alcoholic water' contains 4.7 per cent alcohol by volume (ABV) – slightly higher than an average beer. Coca-Cola says its policy is to 'champion' responsible drinking, but Dr Tony Rao, an expert on alcohol addiction and a visiting researcher at King's College London, said: 'This is a disingenuous attempt to reinvent the alcopops of the 1990s.' [...]

Source: Daily Mail, 7 November 2020

Guinness recalls alcohol-free beer just two weeks after launch

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-54901824>

Guinness is recalling cans of its non-alcoholic stout because of contamination fears, just two weeks after they were launched. The brewer described the recall as "precautionary", but said "microbiological contamination" might mean some products were unsafe. The company urged anyone with cans of Guinness 0.0 not to drink them. It said it was working with supermarkets and other shops to remove all of the products from the shelves. The recall only affects customers in Great Britain, as the product was not yet on sale in Ireland or Northern Ireland. No other Guinness drinks have been recalled. Guinness 0.0 was launched to much fanfare in supermarkets on 26 October, having taken the brewer four years to perfect. [...]

Source: BBC News, 11 November 2020

Pubs and restaurants granted 'automatic' permission for takeaway food and booze until 2022

<https://inews.co.uk/news/uk/pubs-restaurants-automatic-permission-takeaway-food-booze-2022-752318>

Provisions allowing pubs and restaurants to serve takeaway food and alcohol will be extended until 2022 in a bid to shore up the sector. Pubs, bars and restaurants were forced to close across England on Thursday as part of the second national coronavirus lockdown, but relaxed regulations allow takeaway food and alcohol to be served as long as it is pre-ordered[.] Initially due to expire next year, the automatic permission for takeaway sales will be extended for another year, as Communities Secretary Robert Jenrick seeks to give the hospitality sector long-term reassurance. [...]

Source: i News, 7 November 2020

Coronavirus: NI Executive fails to reach decision on restrictions

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-54867072>

The NI Executive has failed to reach a decision on whether to extend or change Covid-19 restrictions regarding the hospitality sector. Ministers held a series of meetings throughout Monday but were unable to agree what steps to take. One option being considered would be to allow cafes to open but licensed premises would remain closed. [...]

Source: BBC News, 10 November 2020

UAE decriminalises alcohol and lifts ban on unmarried couples living together

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/nov/07/united-arab-emirates-to-relax-islamic-laws-on-personal-freedoms>

The United Arab Emirates has ended lenient punishments for so-called "honour" killings, lifted a ban on unmarried couples living together and decriminalised alcohol, in reforms to personal laws. Foreigners living in the Gulf state will also be able to follow their home country's laws on divorce and inheritance, rather than using UAE legislation based on Islamic religious law, government-linked media reported. The country, where citizens are outnumbered nine-to-one by migrants, has long branded itself internationally as a modern business and tourist destination and has not always strictly implemented its own law. When it has, however, reporting on those cases has shadowed its reputation abroad. Such cases have included that of a woman who was jailed after reporting her rape. [...]

Source: The Guardian, 9 November 2020

Diego Maradona: Argentina legend to be treated for alcohol dependency

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/sport/football/54907487>

Argentina legend Diego Maradona will be discharged from hospital on Wednesday and taken to a recovery clinic to be treated for alcohol dependency. Maradona, who led his country to World Cup triumph in 1986, had a successful operation for possible bleeding on his brain earlier in November. However, withdrawal symptoms kept him in hospital for longer. "The good thing is that Diego is together, Diego is solid," his lawyer, Matias Morla, said. [...]

Source: BBC Sport, 11 November 2020

Former US Rep. Jim Ramstad, champion of recovery, dies at 74

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/former-us-rep-jim-ramstad-champion-of-recovery-dies-at-74-minnesota-mental-health-alcoholism-issues-minneapolis-b1645460.html>

Longtime Minnesota congressman Jim Ramstad, a moderate Republican whose battle with alcoholism led him to become a champion of mental health and recovery issues, has died. He was 73. His former chief of staff, Dean Peterson, said Ramstad died at his home in Wayzata late Thursday of Parkinson's disease. "He leaves a legacy of love, service, dignity and respect, especially for the

most vulnerable in our society," Peterson said in a letter to supporters, first reported by Minnesota Public Radio. Ramstad served nine terms in the U.S. House before retiring in 2009. He represented Minnesota's 3rd District, which includes several Minneapolis suburbs. He also served for 10 years in the Minnesota Senate. [...]

Source: Independent, 6 November 2020

A proposal to water down Sweden's state monopoly on booze

<https://www.economist.com/europe/2020/11/07/a-proposal-to-water-down-swedens-state-monopoly-on-booze>

Farmers want to sell wine directly to drinkers. Temperance campaigners are horrified [...]

Source: The Economist, 7 November 2020 [*Sign in required*]

Glasgow study reveals death rates increasing among poorest across UK even before Covid

<https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/18853507.glasgow-study-reveals-death-rates-increasing-among-poorest-across-uk-even-covid/>

A stalling in life expectancies across all parts of the UK is "masking an increase in deaths among the poorest in society", according to new research by public health experts in Glasgow. Researchers from the Glasgow Centre for Population Health (GCPH) describe the rising mortality rates from drugs, alcohol, heart disease and respiratory conditions as a "crisis before the crisis", in reference to the Covid pandemic. They say the findings "*further support suggestions that recent changes in mortality are at least partly a consequence of UK Government 'austerity' measures*" - namely welfare cuts and reduced spending on public services "*particularly affecting the most vulnerable*". [...]

Source: The Herald, 9 November 2020

[Research article doi: [10.1136/bmjopen-2020-038135](https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjopen-2020-038135)]

Scottish Families Affected by Alcohol and Drugs

<https://www.dbrecoveryresources.com/2020/11/scottish-families-affected-by-alcohol-and-drugs/>

SFAD is calling for people who are interested in exploring alcohol in everyday life to join its new group measuring alcohol in everyday life and agreeing actions to reduce alcohol messaging. [end]

Source: DB Recovery Resources, 11 November 2020

Standing together: Tackling the stigma of liver disease

<https://britishlivertrust.org.uk/standing-together-tackling-the-stigma-of-liver-disease/>

The British Liver Trust is here to support anyone with a liver condition, without judgement. We are proud to stand with a caring community of supporters who help us to do this. People with liver disease and their loved ones often have to deal with more than just the physical effects of their condition. They also face a unique challenge that can't be remedied by medication, policy or lifestyle change: stigma. [...]

Source: British Liver Trust, 5 November 2020

Families: forgotten in addiction treatment?

<https://recoveryreview.blog/2020/11/06/families-forgotten-in-addiction-treatment/>

Addiction is an equal opportunity condition. Families get to suffer alongside the person with the problem. But as Alex Copello and Jim Orford noted in a past Addiction editorial, there's a paradox here that needs attention. Firstly, evidence suggests that when families are involved by treatment services, retention in treatment is better. Retention in treatment is associated with better outcomes. It also suggests that positive outcomes are more likely for the family members. So the evidence is there, what's the paradox? Copello and Orford are clear: "On the whole service delivery remains focused on the individual drinker or drug user, with families and other members of the user's social network playing a very peripheral role, if any." [...]

Source: Recovery Review, 6 November 2020

Covid-19: guidance re drugs or alcohol

<https://www.dbrecoveryresources.com/2020/11/covid-19-guidance-re-drugs-or-alcohol/>

Updated Public Health England guidance for commissioners and providers of services for people who use drugs or alcohol in line with national restrictions which started yesterday. [end]

Source: DB Recovery Resources, 6 November 2020

Severe alcohol-related liver disease admissions post-COVID-19 lockdown: canary in the coal mine?

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1136/flgastro-2020-101693>

[...] Following the UK's first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, we highlight an alarming increase in the number and severity of patients presenting with alcohol-related liver disease to tertiary specialist hepatology. Government focus, support and planning to ensure prompt access to treatment services and policies to decrease alcohol excess have long been called for. Service strategies with tailored hepatology input to identify and care for these patients, wherever located, must be addressed urgently now and for the future. [end]

Source: Frontline Gastroenterology, 26 October 2020

Social renters 14 times more likely than homeowners to be victims of alcohol-related domestic violence

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2020-11-social-renters-homeowners-victims-alcohol-related.html>

Minimum alcohol pricing would "disproportionately benefit" poorer households after analysis revealed social renters were more than 14 times more likely to be victims of alcohol related domestic violence than homeowners. Dr. Carly Lightowlers, in the University of Liverpool's Department of Sociology, Social Policy and Criminology and Lucy Bryant at the Institute of Alcohol Studies, analyzed five years of data from the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW), and linked

details of alcohol-related violence or anti-social behavior with information relating to victims' occupation, income and housing tenure. [...]

Source: Medical Xpress, 6 November 2020

[Institute of Alcohol Studies Report (May 2020): <http://www.ias.org.uk/News/2020/20-May-2020-Most-disadvantaged-disproportionately-at-risk-of-alcohol-related-violence.aspx>]

Vaccinating against drug and alcohol deaths

<https://recoveryreview.blog/2020/11/12/vaccinating-against-drug-and-alcohol-deaths/>

[...] The concept I'm contemplating is simple and it's not my idea by any means. It's this: healthy social networks (the people we connect with) are protective. Improving them brings gains in physical and mental health. People suffering with addiction frequently have damaged or unhealthy social networks. They are often dislocated and estranged or excluded from being active community members. As I say, there is existing evidence on this, though there are serious questions about how far it has penetrated into the practice of treatment providers or commissioners. [...]

Source: Recovery Review, 12 November 2020

Let's learn the lessons from the first lockdown and address the issues we know matter

<https://www.nationalvoices.org.uk/publications/our-publications/statement-response-second-lockdown>

National Voices has put together a statement in response to the announcement of a second lockdown beginning on 5 November. We have gathered a great deal of insight from people's experiences of the first lockdown and believe addressing some of the issues raised can be hugely effective in minimising harms this time around. [end]

Source: National Voices, November 2020

