

SHAAP

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

Welcome to SHAAP's weekly media monitoring service: 12 November – 19 November 2020

Campaigners call for 'total ban' on alcohol advertising

<https://news.stv.tv/politics/campaigners-call-for-total-ban-on-alcohol-advertising>

[...] In its manifesto ahead of the vote in May, Scottish Health Action on Alcohol Problems (SHAAP) is pushing for parties to support four “focus areas” aimed at reducing alcohol-related harms. They have asked for a reduction in the affordability, availability and attractiveness of alcohol, which includes restrictions on advertising, promotions and sponsorship, as well as a review of minimum unit pricing with the possibility of raising the current 50p rate. [...] SHAAP also said regulations should be created on sales, creating alcohol-only shops and removing drinks from supermarkets, adding government control of alcohol sales should be “*seriously explored*”. Investing in treatment, reducing health inequalities and protecting young people are other key areas the group – which is a partnership between the Medical Royal Colleges in Scotland and the Faculty of Public Health – is hoping will garner support from prospective MSPs and their parties. [...]

Source: STV News, 19 November 2020

[SHAAP Manifesto for the 2021 Scottish Parliament Election:

<https://www.shaap.org.uk/downloads/reports-and-briefings/293-shaap-2021-manifesto.html>]

Work to bring down alcohol-related hospital admissions 'not good enough', warns charity, after 36,000 in a year

<https://www.scotsman.com/health/work-bring-down-alcohol-related-hospital-admissions-not-good-enough-warns-charity-after-36000-year-3038985>

New figures from Public Health Scotland reveal 23,685 people were hospitalised for alcohol-related reasons in 35,781 admittances in the financial year 2019/20. This is just 96 fewer than the previous year. Alison Douglas, chief executive of Alcohol Focus Scotland, said the figures were “*not good enough*”. “*It's disappointing to see such high numbers of people continuing to being admitted to hospital for reasons relating to alcohol,*” she said. “*The overall level of hospitalisations in 2019/20 has remained similar to the previous years, and that is not good enough.*” In the year 2019/20 the inequality gap widened, with people in the most deprived areas seven times more likely to be hospitalised for an alcohol-related condition than those in the least deprived areas – 1,079 per 100,000 population compared to 155. This is a greater disparity than the previous year, when the rate was six times more likely. [...]

Source: The Scotsman, 18 November 2020

New WHO/Europe factsheet: policy action needed to reduce cancers attributable to alcohol use

<https://www.euro.who.int/en/health-topics/disease-prevention/alcohol-use/news/news/2020/11/new-who-europe-factsheet-policy-action-needed-to-reduce-cancers-attributable-to-alcohol-use>

The new WHO/Europe factsheet, “*Alcohol and cancer in the WHO European Region: an appeal for better prevention*”, emphasizes causal links between alcohol use and a range of cancers, including some of the most common types, such as female breast cancer and colorectal cancer. It also makes clear that alcohol-attributable cancers and deaths can be reduced through implementation of cost-effective policies, such as increasing taxes on alcoholic beverages and restricting marketing and availability of alcohol. The public need to know: even at low levels alcohol consumption can cause cancer. [...]

Source: World Health Organization (Europe), 16 November 2020

WHO/Europe highlights how alcohol undermines sustainable development across the WHO European Region

<https://www.euro.who.int/en/health-topics/health-policy/sustainable-development-goals/news/news/2020/11/who-europe-highlights-how-alcohol-undermines-sustainable-development-across-the-who-european-region>

A new factsheet, “*Alcohol consumption and sustainable development*”, prepared by the WHO Regional Office for Europe, draws attention to the barriers alcohol consumption presents across the Region to achieving 13 of the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). [...] According to the WHO factsheet, current alcohol consumption levels in the Region and worldwide adversely impact 13 SDGs and a total of 52 targets in all three dimensions of the UN 2030 Agenda (economic, social and environmental). Impacts affect a range of health-related indicators, such as child health, infectious diseases and road injuries as well as broader indicators related to economic and social development, environment and equality. [...]

Source: World Health Organization (Europe), 18 November 2020

Over half of UK drinkers have turned to alcohol for mental health reasons during pandemic

<https://alcoholchange.org.uk/blog/2020/press-release-over-half-of-uk-drinkers-have-turned-to-alcohol-for-mental-health-reasons-during-pandemic>

A new survey for Alcohol Awareness Week (16-22 November), commissioned by charity Alcohol Change UK, shows almost one in three drinkers (29%) have been drinking at increasing or high risk levels over the past six months (over 14 units per week). Over half of drinkers (53%) said they have drunk alcohol for a mental health reason – such as feeling anxious, stressed or worried, feeling bored, having trouble sleeping, or feeling sad or low - at least once in the past six months. Anxiety, stress or worry were the most common reasons given for drinking, with four in ten (41%) drinkers reporting this as a reason for drinking at least once in the past six months. But while struggles with

mental health led many to drink alcohol, drinking actually worsened mental health for four in ten drinkers (44%). [...]

Source: Alcohol Change UK, November 2020

Binge drinking among over-50s rising amid pandemic, says UK charity

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2020/nov/18/binge-drinking-among-over-50s-rising-amid-pandemic-says-uk-charity>

Before lockdown, Carole, 55, would go weeks without drinking before embarking on days of binging on wine. Since March, however, she has been drinking four bottles every day. *"I haven't seen anyone since March as I'm not in anybody's bubble,"* she said. *"I've always been a drinker but this is desperation now. I'm just going out of my mind from being on my own."* This is a similar story for many others across the UK, according to a survey by the alcohol charity We Are With You that suggests a rise in high-risk alcohol consumption among over-50s amid restrictions imposed to control the spread of coronavirus. Twenty-four percent are believed to be high risk or possibly dependent, the Opinion Matters study of more than 1,150 people in the age group indicates. That is up from 17% in 2016. It also found that about 51% of those above 50 may be consuming alcohol at a level that could damage their health, with more than 4 million having in excess of four drinks in one sitting at least once a week. [...]

Source: The Guardian, 18 November 2020

Alcohol ban in trains and stations comes into force

<https://news.stv.tv/scotland/alcohol-ban-in-trains-and-stations-comes-into-force>

A ban on drinking alcohol in trains and stations in Scotland has come into force. ScotRail said the temporary measures will ensure social distancing and greater use of face coverings during the pandemic. Body cameras will be worn by rail staff to help enforce the 24-hour restrictions and British Transport Police will be called if someone refuses to stop drinking. Passengers can still carry unopened alcohol in a bag. [...]

Source: STV News, 16 November 2020

House of Lords spent nearly £2,000,000 on alcohol in five years

<https://metro.co.uk/2020/11/13/house-of-lords-splashed-nearly-2000000-on-booze-in-five-years-13587244/>

Campaigners have hit out at the House of Lords for spending so much money on alcohol while many struggle throughout the coronavirus pandemic. A Freedom of Information request revealed the unelected House of Lords has spent nearly £2 million on alcohol since 2015. And despite the country recently being plunged into the deepest recession on record, £126,374 was also spent on alcohol in October this year. [...]

Source: Metro, 13 November 2020

Nearly 400,000 people in North East drinking more alcohol since start of pandemic

<https://www.itv.com/news/tyne-tees/2020-11-16/nearly-400000-people-in-north-east-drinking-more-alcohol-since-start-of-pandemic>

Nearly 400,000 people in the North East have been drinking more since the start of the coronavirus pandemic, according to an alcohol awareness charity. That is the latest research into drinking habits from the charity Balance. The drink awareness organisation has launched a new campaign across the North East to coincide with Alcohol Awareness Week. “*Alcohol – Not the Answer*” highlights that alcohol can weaken our immune system against infectious diseases like Covid, contribute to low mood and anxiety, and cause cancer, stroke and heart disease. [...]

Source: ITV News, 16 November 2020

Lockdown Baby Boomers spending saved money on alcohol, says Royal College of Psychiatrists

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2020/11/15/lockdown-baby-boomers-spending-saved-money-alcohol-says-royal/>

Baby boomers deprived of holidays, sport and socialising during lockdown are spending the money saved on alcohol, fuelling a surge in mental health problems, says the Royal College of Psychiatrists [...]

Source: The Telegraph, 15 November 2020 [*Subscription / Free Trial*]

Alcohol dependence and mental health

<https://publichealthmatters.blog.gov.uk/2020/11/17/alcohol-dependence-and-mental-health/>

There are an estimated 589,000 people who are dependent on alcohol in England and about a quarter of them are likely to be receiving mental health medication; mostly for anxiety and depression, but also for sleep problems, psychosis and bipolar disorder. [...] People in touch with specialist mental health services who also have a history of alcohol problems can be at elevated risk of death by suicide. Between 2007 and 2017 there were 5,963 suicides in mental health patients with a history of alcohol misuse, an average of 542 deaths by suicide per year – about 10% of all deaths by suicide in England. [...]

Source: Public Health England (Public health matters Blog), 17 November 2020

Drinking and mental health: does it really help?

<https://alcoholchange.org.uk/blog/2020/drinking-and-mental-health-does-it-really-help>

In this blog, pharmacist Andy Boysan discusses the effect of alcohol on our mental health, including its association with relieving stress and its impact on anxiety and depression. [...]

Source: Alcohol Change UK, November 2020

Alcohol and mental health: how can we better support those with co-occurring problems?

<https://alcoholchange.org.uk/blog/2020/alcohol-and-mental-health-how-can-we-better-support-those-with-co-occurring-problems>

In this blog, Dr Laura Goodwin, Senior Lecturer in the Epidemiology of Mental Health and Addiction at the University of Liverpool, explores some of the main questions around alcohol and mental health, with a focus on how we can answer them through ongoing research. [...]

Source: Alcohol Change UK, November 2020

Hyperventilating can help clear alcohol from body faster, researchers find

<https://www.theguardian.com/science/2020/nov/13/alcohol-hyperventilating-metabolize-faster-medical-research>

Researchers in Canada have discovered that hyperventilation can significantly increase the rate at which the body metabolizes alcohol, in a breakthrough that could save thousands of lives. Three million people around the world die from alcohol-related deaths each year and emergency room physicians have few effective tools to treat acute alcohol poisoning. In a proof-of-concept paper published this week in the journal *Scientific Reports*, a group of Toronto researchers describe how hyperventilating into a device which regulates carbon dioxide levels can eliminate alcohol far faster than conventional treatments. The device is the size of a briefcase and delivers carbon dioxide to users from a tank, ensuring that CO₂ levels in the blood remain constant – thus preventing dizziness and nausea during hyperventilation. [...]

Source: The Guardian, 13 November 2020

[Research article doi: [10.1038/s41598-020-76233-9](https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-020-76233-9)]

Woolworths set to build one of Australia's biggest liquor stores near dry Darwin Aboriginal communities

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2020/nov/13/woolworths-set-to-build-one-of-australias-biggest-liquor-stores-near-dry-darwin-aboriginal-communities>

Woolworths is set to build one of Australia's biggest alcohol outlets within walking distance of Darwin's Aboriginal communities, after the Northern Territory government rushed through laws to allow it, raising the fury of health organisations who say it is "*closing the gap of life expectancy in the wrong direction*". Members of the NT's independent liquor commission, whose decisions have been sidelined by the new law, have also threatened to resign over the "*debacle*". Woolworths' plan to build a large-scale Dan Murphy's outlet in suburban Darwin has been held back for several years by strong community opposition. [...]

Source: The Guardian, 13 November 2020

COVID-19 Risk for People in Addiction Recovery?

<http://www.williamwhitepapers.com/blog/2020/11/covid-19-risk-for-people-in-addiction-recovery.html>

Health and psychosocial risks associated with COVID-19 fall disproportionately on historically marginalized populations. I recently reviewed published studies on preliminary findings related to COVID-19 among people experiencing or recovering from substance use disorders (SUD). Major findings from this review are summarized [...]

Source: Selected Papers of William L. White, 12 November 2020

The Frequency and Content of Discussions About Alcohol Use in Primary Care and Application of the Chief Medical Officer's Low-Risk Drinking Guidelines: A Cross-Sectional Survey of General Practitioners and Practice Nurses in the UK

<https://doi.org/10.1093/alcalc/aaa120>

[...] "Conversations about patients' alcohol consumption are not happening regularly in consultations with GPs and PNs in the UK. Validated assessment tools are underutilized in discussions on alcohol consumption in primary care, and practitioner advice may not reflect contemporary national guidelines. Further research is required to identify mechanisms that can increase the frequency of discussions about alcohol use and appropriate recommendation of the CMO drinking guidelines to patients."

Source: *Alcohol and Alcoholism*, 12 November 2020

Two thirds of serving or ex-Service personnel with a current or prior alcohol problem are not seeking help

<https://news.liverpool.ac.uk/2020/11/17/two-thirds-of-serving-or-ex-service-personnel-with-a-current-or-prior-alcohol-problem-are-not-seeking-help/>

A new report launched today (17th November) by the University of Liverpool and King's College London shows that more than two thirds (71%) of serving and ex-Service personnel who self-reported a current or prior alcohol problem, have not sought help. The report, funded by Forces in Mind Trust (FiMT), shows that recognition of alcohol misuse problems and help-seeking for self-reported alcohol problems among serving and ex-Service personnel is low, with approximately only half who met the criteria for alcohol misuse recognising they had an alcohol problem. The report found that recognition of alcohol misuse problems was significantly higher among those with greater mental and physical health needs and increased alcohol misuse severity. [...]

Source: University of Liverpool News, 17 November 2020

Age gates on alcohol websites are ineffective, research shows

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2020-11-age-gates-alcohol-websites-ineffective.html>

"Age gates" that aim to keep underage users off alcohol websites are mostly ineffective, a Texas A&M University alcohol researcher found. "*Alcohol brand age gates are weak, at best, and likely an inconsequential barrier that someone with limited math abilities can easily overcome,*" said Adam Barry, a professor in the Department of Health and Kinesiology. Barry's research, which was recently published in *Alcohol or Alcoholism*, assessed the effectiveness of the digital age gates of the top alcohol brands among American adolescents. The study found that for the vast majority of the sites, users could gain access after continuously entering dates of birth until eventually providing one indicating they were older than 21. Many sites also had no process for verifying the accuracy of the provided date of birth. [...]

Source: Medical Xpress, 12 November 2020
[Research article doi: [10.1093/alcac/agaa090](https://doi.org/10.1093/alcac/agaa090)]

New ESPAD results: teenage drinking and smoking down, but concerns over risky cannabis use and new addictive behaviours

<http://espad.org/content/new-espad-results-teenage-drinking-and-smoking-down-concerns-over-risky-cannabis-use-and-new>

Smoking and drinking among 15–16-year-old school students are showing signs of decline, but there are concerns over potentially risky cannabis use and the challenges posed by new addictive behaviours. These are among the findings released today in a new report from the European School Survey Project on Alcohol and Other Drugs (ESPAD). The study, published in collaboration with the EU drugs agency (EMCDDA), is based on a 2019 survey in 35 European countries, including 25 EU Member States. This is the seventh data-collection wave conducted by the ESPAD project since 1995. A total of 99 647 students participated in the latest survey round, responding to an anonymous questionnaire. The ESPAD Report 2019 features information on students' experience of, and perceptions about, a variety of substances, including: tobacco, alcohol, illicit drugs, inhalants, pharmaceuticals and new psychoactive substances (NPS). Social media use, gaming and gambling are also covered. [...]

Source: ESPAD, 12 November 2020

Alcohol problems and insurance

<http://www.ias.org.uk/Blog/Alcohol-problems-and-insurance.aspx>

The relationship between alcohol and insurance may not seem obvious, but there are good reasons for looking at both subjects in conjunction, solicitor Jonathan Goodliffe explains. [...]

Source: Institute of Alcohol Studies, 18 November 2020

Nudge theory and alcohol policy

<https://www.dbrecoveryresources.com/2020/11/nudge-theory-and-alcohol-policy/>

Free Institute of Alcohol Studies webinar on 2 December: By understanding how individuals make decisions about their health and consumption, policymakers can design 'nudges' to alter the choices we make.

Source: DB Recovery Resources, 13 November 2020

[Eventbrite: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/nudge-theory-and-alcohol-policy-how-nudge-might-shape-drinking-tickets-127881935311>]

If lockdown has tipped you into problem drinking, you're probably not alone

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/nov/18/lockdown-problem-drinking-not-alone-alcohol-dependence-challenging>

The pandemic is creeping into the colder months, something many of us hoped would never happen. The first time around, the surprise of lockdown meant that people who were alcohol-dependent risked not being able to access a regular supply, which meant they were potentially facing withdrawal, seizures and hallucinations, even death. As a result, those of us working in alcohol services – I'm a psychiatrist specialising in addiction – had to change our approach. We had to shift from detoxification and supporting sobriety to – what? Strangely enough, we found ourselves encouraging people to continue drinking, to not make any changes; some people had to be supplied with alcohol when they were unable to get it for themselves. [...]

Source: The Guardian, 18 November 2020

Alcohol Awareness Week: How to recognise and remedy problematic drinking in lockdown

<https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/alcohol-awareness-week-2020-lockdown-covid-b1723777.html>

While many of us have had to spend the majority of 2020 at home, and pubs and bars have faced nationwide closure, Britons have been turning to alcohol as a coping mechanism during lockdown. [...] As winter closes in and the side effects and stresses of the pandemic endure, it's important to find ways of recognising when your enjoyment of a drink might be posing a problem to your physical and mental health. [...] Here are some things to remember when it comes to recognising and remedying problematic lockdown drinking. [...]

Source: Independent, 18 November 2020

