

SHAAP

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

Welcome to SHAAP's weekly media monitoring service: 19 November – 26 November 2020

Alcohol deaths in Scotland fall 10% in first year of minimum pricing

<https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/18895486.alcohol-deaths-scotland-fall-10-first-year-minimum-pricing/>

New figures reveal a “notable fall” in the number of people dying in Scotland as a direct result of alcohol consumption for the first time in seven years. Statistics from the National Records of Scotland show that there were 1,020 alcohol-specific deaths in 2019, down from 1,136 in the previous year. Direct alcohol deaths are nearly three times higher than they were in 1979, when 389 were recorded, but experts believe we are already seeing the impact of minimum pricing. [...] Dr Peter Rice, chair of SHAAP and a former consultant psychiatrist in NHS Tayside’s Alcohol Problems Service, said: *“Although it takes many years to develop liver disease, whether or not you die depends on your drinking in the last year. [...] We think what minimum pricing will have done is that people who were at risk without knowing it will have been moved away from becoming ill as a result of their consumption reducing...”* [...]

Source: The Herald, 25 November 2020

[National Records of Scotland: Alcohol deaths: <https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/statistics-and-data/statistics/statistics-by-theme/vital-events/deaths/alcohol-deaths>]

Why the 1990s marked a dangerous wrong turn in Scotland's relationship with alcohol

<https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/18895497.the1990s-marked-dangerous-wrong-turn-scotlands-relationship-alcohol/>

Between 1979 and 1992, the number of direct alcohol deaths rose only slightly, from 389 to 410. Then, in the space of the next 14 years, that figure soared. By 2006 - when alcohol-specific deaths peaked in Scotland - 1,417 people lost their lives. The trend was mirrored across the UK, coinciding with increased availability and affordability of alcohol in the off-trade - particularly as supermarket sales grew. Meanwhile, in Europe, alcohol deaths had been falling steadily since the 1970s. By 2018, alcohol sold in the UK was 64% more affordable than it had been in 1987, and three quarters of alcohol consumed is now bought

in the off-trade. The effects were more rapid and pronounced in Scotland, however. Among men aged 45 to 64, the mortality rate from liver disease in Scotland in 2006 was more than double that seen in England and Wales. Dr Peter Rice, chair of SHAAP, describes 1995 as Scotland's "last year as a pub drinking country", as off-trade consumption overtook that in bars. [...]

Source: The Herald, 25 November 2020

Millions drinking more heavily due to coronavirus pandemic

<https://metro.co.uk/2020/11/22/millions-drinking-more-heavily-due-to-coronavirus-pandemic-13636156/>

Alcohol Change UK surveyed drinkers to find out the effect of lockdown and the virus. They found that 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. Chief Executive Dr Richard Piper said: '*Covid-19 has negatively affected our nation's mental health, and has led millions of us to drink more heavily. Challenging the stigma and shame that many of us feel when we realise our drinking has got out of control is more important now than ever.*' [...]

Source: Metro, 22 November 2020

Minimum alcohol price demanded to save thousands

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/edition/news/minimum-alcohol-price-demanded-to-save-thousands-qr5rh0kwr>

More than 5,000 lives could be saved over the next decade if ministers impose both minimum unit pricing for alcohol and steeper taxes on drink, experts have claimed. In a letter published in *The Times* today, four prominent healthcare specialists welcome a recent expert report from the independent Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS). The study pointed to research that said that minimum unit pricing by itself was reasonably effective at targeting heavy drinkers but could hinder competition and reduce tax revenues. The IFS concluded that a combination of a minimum unit price and a more coherent set of taxes on alcohol would be as effective in tackling heavy drinkers but could also limit the fall in revenue for the exchequer. [...]

Source: The Times, 23 November 2020 [*Subscription / Free Trial*]

Substance misuse treatment for adults: statistics 2019 to 2020

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/substance-misuse-treatment-for-adults-statistics-2019-to-2020>

Statistics on alcohol and drug misuse treatment for adults from Public Health England's National Drug Treatment Monitoring System (NDTMS). [end]

Source: Public Health England, 26 November 2020

Veterans' substance use has devastating impact on family members

<https://www.york.ac.uk/news-and-events/news/2020/research/families-veterans-support/>

The families of veterans with substance use problems struggle with high levels of isolation and loneliness and experience extreme distress and despair, a new report has revealed. The report, by researchers at the University of York, also found that the families of veterans with substance use problems are unlikely to seek or be offered help, even if the veteran engages with support. The study, which was carried out in collaboration with Adfam and funded by Forces in Mind Trust (FiMT), is the first UK study to focus on the experience of families of veterans with substance use problems. It shows the wellbeing of a veteran's loved ones can be significantly affected by their problem substance use, both during and after leaving the Armed Forces. [...]

Source: University of York, 24 November 2020

Alcohol advertising generally leads to higher alcohol use

<https://www.dbrecoveryresources.com/2020/11/alcohol-advertising-generally-leads-to-higher-alcohol-use/>

University of Amsterdam and University of Twente showed that, unsurprisingly, alcohol marketing generally leads to higher alcohol consumption, including among minors. [end]

Source: DB Recovery Resources, 26 November 2020

My adopted son's life was changed by alcohol in pregnancy

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-55001498>

When Lorna took the leap to adopt, she had no idea her new family could be living with the effects of alcohol for the rest of their lives. Lorna and her partner, who live near Glasgow, have three children: two boys and a younger girl who is their sibling, but joined them later. One of her children has been diagnosed with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) - a neurodevelopmental condition caused by ingestion of alcohol during pregnancy. But she suspects all three were exposed to alcohol during pregnancy. It affects at least 3-5% of children and adults across all areas of society. In Scotland, clinicians have found evidence it could be prevalent in one in seven babies. It is a condition that is little known, but could be more common than autism and ADHD combined. And there is evidence to suggest that because of their background and situation, adopted children are more likely to have the disorder. [...]

Source: BBC News, 21 November 2020

Scottish Government launches FASD eLearning resource

<https://www.alliance-scotland.org.uk/blog/news/scottish-government-launches-fasd-elearning-resource/>

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) is both the most common and the most overlooked neurodevelopmental condition in Scotland. The Scottish Government estimates that approximately 172,000 children, young people and adults across the country have their lives and life chances adversely affected by FASD. And yet, only a small proportion of people with FASD have been diagnosed, actively assisted or effectively supported. To help overcome the longstanding misdiagnosis, misunderstanding and mistreatment of people with this life-altering condition, the Scottish Government has launched a free FASD eLearning resource [...]

Source: ALLIANCE, 24 November 2020

State-run off-licenses among alcohol reform calls

<https://healthandcare.scot/default.asp?page=story&story=2289>

Doctors who see the effects of heavy drinking on people's health are calling for radical measures to stop covid-19 worsening the country's alcohol problem. They are warning that action is needed now to tackle problems being stored up during the covid-19 pandemic, which has accelerated a long-term shift to people drinking at home. One of the proposals is for tougher regulations on availability in shops, including the prospect of only allowing government-run shops to sell alcohol. [...] Also included in the manifesto for change is a minimum income for healthy living to protect the most vulnerable during the economic downturn. [...] The manifesto for the upcoming 2021 Scottish Parliament elections, which has been unveiled by SHAAP, calls for measures in four key areas. [...]

Source: healthandcare.scot, 20 November 2020

[SHAAP Manifesto for the 2021 Scottish Parliament Election:

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

Managing alcohol use in primary care

<https://www.bmj.com/content/371/bmj.m4129>

People who struggle with alcohol problems are stigmatised in extraordinary ways. The UK treatment system has been partly dismantled and cheaper provision outside the National Health Service accepted. Predictably, much of the burden of alcohol related disease is borne by hospitals, not least because there is little alcohol treatment available in primary care. Even seemingly unremarkable drinking is implicated in a wide range of health issues. Usually

unnoticed, alcohol interferes with the everyday work of primary care. This dysfunctional situation requires high level strategic planning to clarify the role of primary care in managing the UK's problematic relation with alcohol. The linked study by Cheng and colleagues (doi:[10.1136/bmj.m3934](https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.m3934)) used network meta-analysis to examine the evidence underpinning mostly drug interventions for maintaining abstinence after detoxification. The authors found that existing evidence for drug treatments is weak. [...]

Source: *The BMJ*, 25 November 2020

Health at a glance: Europe

<https://www.dbrecoveryresources.com/2020/11/health-at-a-glance-europe/>

Consumption of alcohol is responsible for 255,000-290,000 deaths per year across the EU. A 3rd of adults report at least one “binge drinking” event in the past month, and over a 5th of adolescents aged 15 report being drunk more than once, the European Commission revealed. [end]

Source: DB Recovery Resources, 24 November 2020

Spoiler alert: Don't watch movies for nutritional advice

<https://mailchi.mp/statnews/tk-tncyc6de8v-605070?e=ffb51509bb>

[...T]he food and drinks we see depicted in movies fall far short of nutritional goals, a new study concludes. Researchers watched how food and beverages were portrayed in 250 top-grossing U.S. movies from 1994 through 2018. Depictions of food were unhealthy in nearly three-quarters of movies and unhealthy in 90% of movies showing drinks — meaning they would not have met food and beverage advertising standards in the U.K. or diet recommendations in the U.S. Sugar content was a bit higher than what Americans actually consume, but alcohol consumption was more than three times greater on the big screen. Food for thought from the researchers: “*Movies represent a high-impact opportunity to promote healthy consumption.*” [end]

Source: STAT, 24 November 2020

[Research article doi: [10.1001/jamainternmed.2020.5421](https://doi.org/10.1001/jamainternmed.2020.5421)]

Drug eases recovery for those with severe alcohol withdrawal

<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2020/11/201119124716.htm>

A drug once used to treat high blood pressure can help alcoholics with withdrawal symptoms reduce or eliminate their drinking, Yale University researchers report Nov. 19 in the *American Journal of Psychiatry*. In a double-blind study, researchers gave the drug prazosin or a placebo to 100 people entering outpatient treatment after being diagnosed with alcohol use disorder. All of the patients had experienced varying degrees of withdrawal

symptoms prior to entering treatment. According to the researchers, subjects with more severe symptoms -- including shakes, heightened cravings and anxiety, and difficulty sleeping -- who received prazosin significantly reduced the number of heavy drinking episodes and days they drank compared to those who received a placebo. The drug had little effect on those with few or no withdrawal symptoms. [...]

Source: ScienceDaily, 19 November 2020

[Research article doi: [10.1176/appi.ajp.2020.20050609](https://doi.org/10.1176/appi.ajp.2020.20050609)]

Alcohol consumption impairs visual function and adversely affects driving performance

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2020-11-alcohol-consumption-impairs-visual-function.html>

A study carried out by researchers from the Department of Optics of the University of Granada (UGR) has revealed that alcohol consumption impairs visual function and adversely affects driving performance. It was found to decrease contrast sensitivity (that is, the ability to discern image contrasts) and create a veiling luminance over the individual's vision, by increasing the retinal straylight (intraocular scattered light that reaches the retina). [...]

Source: Medical Xpress, 24 November 2020

[Research article doi: [10.1038/s41598-020-70645-3](https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-020-70645-3)]

Sexual minorities, especially women, who misuse substances more likely to have psychiatric disorders

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2020-11-sexual-minorities-women-misuse-substances.html>

More than half of lesbian, gay and bisexual individuals who misuse alcohol or tobacco also have a co-occurring psychiatric disorder, compared to one-third of heterosexuals, a new University of Michigan study finds. [...] The findings underscore the importance of mental health screening for sexual minorities with alcohol or tobacco use disorders, she said. Evans-Polce and colleagues analyzed 35,796 responses from the National Epidemiologic Study on Alcohol and Related Conditions-III. [...]

Source: Medical Xpress, 20 November 2020

[Research article doi: [10.1176/appi.ajp.2020.20010005](https://doi.org/10.1176/appi.ajp.2020.20010005)]

Risk of death high among those with alcohol-related visits to ED: CMAJ study

https://www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2020-11/cmaj-rod111720.php

The risk of death is high for people who visit the emergency department (ED) for alcohol use, and the risk increases with frequency, according to a new study in *CMAJ* (*Canadian Medical Association Journal*). [...] The study included people aged 16 years and older who

had at least 2 ED visits for mental and behavioural issues related to alcohol within a 12-month period between January 2010 and December 2016. It included 25 813 people, of whom two-thirds (17 020) had 2 ED visits within 1 year, 22% (5704) had 3 or 4 visits, and 12% (3089) had 5 or more visits. For people with 2 or more alcohol-related ED visits in a 12-month period, 1 in 20 would die within a year of their last ED visit. For people with 5 or more visits, the risk of death doubled. More than two-thirds of people with 5 or more alcohol-related visits were male (71.5%), almost half (46.5%) were aged 45-64 years, and the majority (89.6%) lived in urban centres, with 40% of those coming from the lowest-income neighbourhoods. [...]

Source: EurekAlert!, 23 November 2020

[Research article doi: [10.1503/cmaj.191730](https://doi.org/10.1503/cmaj.191730)]

Alcohol Deaths and Minimum Unit Pricing

<https://www.alcohol-focus-scotland.org.uk/news/alcohol-deaths-and-minimum-unit-pricing/>

Yesterday [24 November] the National Records for Scotland published data on alcohol-specific deaths in Scotland in 2019. These figures are of interest to anyone looking to prevent alcohol deaths. One of the most significant policies which has been put in place at a national level in Scotland to help reduce deaths and improve health is Minimum Unit Price. We asked Colin Angus, from the University of Sheffield team which developed the model for the 50p per unit MUP in place in Scotland since 2018, to look at what the alcohol-specific death stats tell us about MUP. [...]

Source: Alcohol Focus Scotland, 25 November 2020

The Government has the chance to overhaul our outdated and unfair alcohol duty system to protect health

<https://alcoholchange.org.uk/blog/2020/unfair-alcohol-duty-system>

As promised in their 2019 manifesto, the Government has embarked upon a review of alcohol duty – the tax levied on alcohol sales. Alcohol Change UK is calling for a fairer system of tax that protects health, reduces harm, and covers the enormous cost of alcohol to our NHS and public services. [...]

Source: Alcohol Change UK, November 2020

More joined-up work needed across services in the UK

<https://alcoholchange.org.uk/blog/2020/more-joined-up-work-needed-across-services-in-the-uk>

With so many people experiencing problems with their alcohol use and their mental health at the same time, Dr Anne Campbell from Queen's University Belfast explains why it's so important to provide joined-up care that is tailored to an individual's needs. [...]

Source: Alcohol Change UK, November 2020

Alcohol and ageing well in a time of lockdown

<https://www.ageing-better.org.uk/blogs/alcohol-and-ageing-well-time-lockdown>

In this guest blog, Julie Breslin, Head of Programme at Drink Wise, Age Well, talks about the effects of COVID-19 on alcohol consumption, the barriers those face to getting help and how to make alcohol services more accessible to older adults. [...]

Source: Centre for Ageing Better, 20 November 2020

St Mungo's: Supporting people facing complex challenges

<https://alcoholchange.org.uk/blog/2020/st-mungos-supporting-people-facing-complex-challenges>

In this blog, Emma Cookson from homelessness charity St Mungo's discusses the mutually reinforcing relationship between alcohol and mental health problems and homelessness, and how treatment services are often designed only to treat one of those problems at a time. [...]

Source: Alcohol Change UK, November 2020

Add in mutual aid for better outcomes

<https://recoveryreview.blog/2020/11/20/add-in-mutual-aid-for-better-outcomes/>

The majority of treatment for drug and alcohol problems is outpatient. Trying to achieve abstinence can be tough and some evidence suggests it is more likely to be the goal of clients than the aspiration of professionals for their clients. How well do clients do? This study by Gerald Cochrane and colleagues from New York looked at those clients maintaining abstinence in early treatment and compared them to those who found it harder. They looked at big numbers (almost 500 patients) to see what was going on. The folk who tested negative for drugs early on didn't seem to have worse drug problems, but they did have better mental and physical health and they were less likely to use more than one drug. The thing that caught my attention was that the patients evidencing abstinence also had much higher attendance rates at 12-step mutual aid groups. [...]

Source: Recovery Review, 20 November 2020

Substance abuse and addiction – NICE Talks Podcast

<https://soundcloud.com/nicecomms/substance-abuse-and-addiction/s-Rq9GZv6a6Eo>

In this episode of NICE Talks, we look at substance abuse and addiction. What can we do to prevent it, and how can we treat addiction? We speak to Professor Jim McCambridge, professor of addictive behaviours and public health at the University of York, and Dr Tim Leighton, director of professional education and research at Action on Addiction. [end]

Source: SoundCloud, 24 November 2020

