



BUSINESSatOECD

Seminar Highlights

**Empirical evidence in alcohol abuse
prevention programs and alcohol policies**

Via Zoom, 15 October 2020, 14:00 - 17:00 Paris time



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INTRODUCTION



Dr Gregor Zwiern

Research Associate at the
University of Cambridge G.Z.
Research & Consulting KG

- Alcoholic beverages have become almost two to six times more affordable (depending on the specific country) in EU countries compared to 1975, while per capita alcohol consumption level has declined by 19.5% on EU average (in some countries, the decline was massive: -61% in Italy, -56% in France, -54% in Spain). Data shows that alcohol affordability appears not to be the main driver for per capita alcohol consumption.
- Also available data shows that alcohol-related harm indicators such as life expectancy at birth, drink-driving deaths, and underage drinking are unrelated to per capita alcohol consumption levels and trends.
- The declining trend in alcohol-related harm indicators mentioned above, plus per capita alcohol consumption levels and trends (declining, stable & increasing) occurred in EU Member States independently of strict or lenient implementations of population-based policy measures, such as tax/price increases.
- Point 1-3 imply that per capita alcohol consumption is neither the problem nor should be the target.

Panel I - How to reduce underage drinking?



Chris Simes

Managing Director,
Collingwood Learning
UK

- Smashed, by Collingwood Learning, is a live educational theatre programme and video based e-learning course for teenagers. It uses powerful drama and interactivity to help young people explore the risks of underage drinking and develop behaviours and attitudes to make safe choices.
- Smashed has reached 950,000 teenagers with live and online programs across 25 countries and territories through the network of creative providers, industry sponsors, and government stakeholders.
- As a result, 95% of the students who participated in the program say that they are less likely to drink underage, and 87% of teachers feel more confident talking to young people about alcohol.



**Augusto Pérez
Gómez**

Nuevos Rumbos

- Our Brief Intervention Motivational Interviewing (IBEM) Program is a school-based individualized prevention program used in Colombia, Brazil and Mexico, focusing on alcohol and drug use among adolescents.
- Three repeated, one-to-one in-person interviews with students identify risk categories and structured goals for changing their behavior. The program's main strength is that it promotes the involvement of society, such as family, school, community, and peers in preventive efforts that build upon solid theoretical foundations.
- Virtual IBEM is now being provided to students from secondary to high school and university students and adults.

Panel II - How to reduce alcohol related harm?



**Professor
Grant J Devilly**

*School of Applied
Psychology & Griffith
Criminology Institute,
Griffith*



**Prof. Peter
Anderson**

*Population Health
Sciences Institute,
Newcastle University,
England*

- Queensland, Australia, implemented new government legislation tackling Alcohol-Fueled violence in 2016, closing the night entertainment district (NED) two hours earlier and limiting rapid intoxication drinks and takeaway alcohol.
- Research involving the breathalysing of 15,000 patrons over six years in the NEDs found that: people entered the NED later; on entry to the NED the number of patrons who had a zero breath alcohol concentration decreased from 27% to 17%; of those who preloaded, the breath alcohol concentration rose from 0.071 to 0.086 g/100ml; those admitting to taking other drugs increased; end-of-night breath alcohol concentration remained unchanged; assaults became more variable; being on the streets and interacting with patrons while offering breathalysing services was also associated with a halving in assaults.
- This shows that legislative measures do not always reach behaviour change as aimed and we have other tools at our disposal to reduce assault.
- Analysis of household purchase data from Kantar's 30,000 household shopping panel in Great Britain shows that the introduction of no and low alcohol beers and reformulation of existing beers to contain less alcohol reduced overall 8% in purchased grams of alcohol by households. The impact in reduction was greater for reformulated beer than for new low and no alcohol beer.
- Investigation of the impact of introducing the Minimum Unit Price on the purchase of alcohol beers in Scotland and Wales found that price can be used to favour a shift in purchases from higher strength beers to no and low alcohol beers.
- Following the models used in salt and sugar reduction initiatives, the most important public health target should focus on Alcohol by Volume reduction. A target could be set to reduce the ABV of beer by 10% in relative terms over a five-year period.

Panel II - How to reduce alcohol related harm?



Estrella Merlos

Associate Director,
United Nations
Institute for Training
and Research



**The Honorable
Richard
Vlavianos**

San Joaquin County
Superior Court Judge

- UNITAR has provided high-quality education and skills training to 133,421 people in 2019.
- Under the SDGs target 3.6, UNITAR is working on 3 initiatives on 1) drink-driving prevention strategies, 2) use of child restraint system, 3) awareness of road risks.
- A high visibility enforcement training program was created in 2017 with the support of Diageo. The 2 case studies in Mexico and the Dominican Republic show that sobriety checkpoints and random breath-testing can contribute to minimizing the likelihood of the drink-driving.
- "Driving While Impaired Courts" (DWI Courts) utilize a team approach for individuals who are high risk and have high substance use disorder needs. The judge, prosecutor, defence attorney, probation and treatment work together to provide individualized supervision and treatment plans to address offender behavior and treatment needs. Evaluations have determined that the programs have produced up to a 200% return on investment and meta-analysis found that the best DWI courts reduce recidivism by 60% among clients who graduate. Studies show that DWI courts are very effective, but cover only a small subset of high risk DWI offenders and are expensive.
- The Multi-track model of DWI Court has shown that the same basic principles used in DWI Courts can be applied to address all high risk DWI offenders, providing much greater public safety while dramatically reducing the cost per client. Studies have shown that by using the Multi-track model a significantly greater reduction in recidivism; had been drinking crashes; and injury crashes can be achieved for the larger group of all high risk DWI offenders, including the 70% that are excluded by the traditional DWI Court. The lowest recidivism, crash rate and injury rates are actually for those who require monitoring and accountability only.
- Stricter punishment is not always the answer for repeat offenders. Laws are necessary but enforcement determines outcomes."

Panel III - Negative incentives to reduce heavy drinking



Ted Miller

Pacific Institute for
Research and
Evaluation, Maryland,
USA

- The result of the Columbus Safe Ride program shows that providing Safe Ride discount codes or taxi vouchers reduced drink-driving crashes and saved years of a healthy life, but it also increased alcohol consumption.
- However, it was not cost-effective and only minimally reduced the frequency of drink-driving.
- Governments should not devote energy or resources to ridesharing programs if the primary objective is to reduce drink-driving or harmful alcohol use.



James C. Fell

NORC at University of
Chicago, Maryland,
USA

- A comprehensive literature review and synthesis revealed that alternative transportation (AT) is an important strategy in preventing impaired driving.
- Some AT programs produced reductions in one or more measures of impaired driving while other AT programs were not shown to be effective and a few resulted in a self-reported increase in alcohol consumption by the users.
- The most successful AT programs have social acceptance, are low cost, have year-round availability and are convenient and safe.

Panel III - Negative incentives to reduce heavy drinking



**Piotr
Strykowski**

Senior Project
Manager, Public
Governance
Directorate, OECD

- The effects of the COVID-19 pandemics on markets for alcohol have been very dynamic and profound. The key elements include closure of borders, reshape of suppliers' structure, destruction of existing relations in supply chains, as well as the change in enforcement priorities. During the COVID-19 pandemic, additional volumes of illegal alcohol have been entering the markets through vulnerable supply chains, weak enforcement, and porous borders.
- Governments in many countries react to these challenges keeping citizens' health and safety in mind. However, the fast pace of the pandemics and the complexity of related effects pose enormous challenges for effective policymaking. In some cases policy actions yield unwanted negative consequences. Such negative consequences can have damaging fiscal impacts and stimulate supply on illicit markets that meet unsatisfied demand. Many of these unwanted consequences would be difficult to counter, even after the end of the pandemics.
- Strengthening and coordinating of information sharing is essential across sectors not only to observe the situation but also to prevent actively and counter the threat. In this context, continued monitoring of the risk is essential in developing a global standard for unbiased and robust evidence on illicit trade.

CONCLUSION



Laurent Sheer

Vice-President, Global Public Affairs & Alcohol in Society, Pernod Ricard

Vice Chair, Business at OECD, Health Committee

“The seminar showed a universal objective to reduce alcohol abuse, and a common assessment that changing people’s behavior is a complex undertaking. The various testimonies from scientists, law enforcement officials or government agencies across the world show there is no one size fits all, and that effective strategies need to be tailored to the cultural and geographical environment.

If regulatory policies have a role to play to prevent alcohol abuse, they usually have limitations. As the speakers at the seminar have however demonstrated, the right educational strategies, if they are carefully devised and target the right people in the right way, can also be effective to tackle excessive drinking.

OECD can play a decisive role by leveraging these insights, this requires broadening the policy horizon beyond pure regulatory interventions and borrowing from empirical experiences in education.”



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