



What works – and why do governments continue to do what doesn't work?



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Why should we worry about alcohol?

- Alcohol is good for us

Systematic reviews of the evidence conclusively demonstrate that the net effect to society is detrimental

Why should we worry about alcohol?

- Alcohol is good for us
- Drinking is pretty harmless

In 2004, 4.6% of the global burden of disease and 3.8% of deaths around the world were attributable to alcohol (Rehm et al., 2009)....
and then there's the social cost...

Why should we worry about alcohol?

- Alcohol is good for us
- Drinking is pretty harmless
- It's only teenagers that have a problem

Of the alcohol-attributable burden of disease worldwide:

- 33.6% is among people aged 15 to 29
- 31.3% people aged 30 to 44 years
- 22% people aged 45 to 59 years

Why should we worry about alcohol?

- Alcohol is good for us
- Drinking is pretty harmless
- It's only teenagers that have a problem
- Its no worse now than in the past

- alcohol consumption declined steadily throughout the nineteenth century
- consumption began to increase in the 1960s
- a doubling of consumption among 11 to 15 year olds between 1990 and 2006

What does the evidence tell us?

- Several comprehensive reviews of the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of interventions to reduce alcohol-related harms
- The most effective strategies are:
 - increasing the price and reducing the availability of alcohol;
 - banning alcohol advertising;
 - drink-driving interventions (such as random breath testing and low or zero blood alcohol concentration restrictions for inexperienced drivers); and
 - individual interventions with at-risk drinkers

(Anderson et al 2009; Babor et al 2010)

So now we know what to do, let's get on with it....

	What works?	What do governments do
Increasing the price of alcohol	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Reducing the availability of alcohol	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Banning alcohol advertising	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Drink-driving interventions	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Individual interventions	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
School-based education	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Public information campaigns	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Industry-funded campaigns	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

- It appears, in the countries for which data is available, that the policies with the widest community support are those that the evidence suggests are ineffective.
- In Australia (AIHW 2008)
 - increasing the price of alcohol - 13% strongly support
 - reducing trading hours for pubs and clubs - 20% strongly support
 - increasing the legal drinking age - 26% strongly support
 - limiting alcohol advertising on television until after 9.30pm - 40% strongly support

- Survey of over 4000 people in four districts in Finland (Holmila et al 2009)
 - educating the young on dangers related to drinking 88% fully support
 - providing information on alcohol related harms 75% fully support
 - increasing the price of alcohol 26% fully support
 - decreasing alcohol store hours 21% fully support
 - banning alcohol advertising 20% fully support



So, what is the role of social marketing?

“... while public information and education programs are largely ineffective in reducing harmful alcohol consumption [i.e., bringing about individual behaviour change], there is evidence that these programs (and thus, if done well, social marketing) can serve to raise public and political awareness of the need to address alcohol-related harm”

(Anderson et al 2009).



- The role of social marketing is to work consistently and cohesively to bring about the necessary changes in our communities to address the current, and increasing, levels of alcohol-related harm
- Requires a combination of:
 - customer-focused (downstream) social marketing
 - critical marketing, and
 - strategies to bring about environmental and policy change (upstream social marketing)

- If, as social marketers, we are to make a contribution to addressing alcohol related harms in our communities, we need to:
 - move the conversation away from ‘problem’ drinkers (such as young people) and instead talk about our drinking cultures;
 - move away from ineffective (but popular) victim-blaming, high-fear social *advertising* campaigns;
 - shine an enquiring light on the tactics of commercial marketers.
 - shift the conversation – with the community and with governments – to the strategies that are effective