

Patterns of Drinking and the Need for Targeted Interventions

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Drinking in Context: Patterns, interventions and partnerships

Stimson, G., Grant, M., Choquet, M., Garrison, P. *et al.* New York: Routledge (Forthcoming).

Sponsoring organizations:

International Center for Alcohol Policies (ICAP)

International Harm Reduction Association (IHRA)

Institute de Recherches sur les Boissons (IREB)

World Federation for Mental Health (WFMH)

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“Drinking patterns are important determinants of both positive and negative consequences of drinking.”

Single & Leino (1998). *Drinking Patterns and their Consequences*. Washington, DC: Taylor & Francis.

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Drinking patterns describe three aspects of alcohol consumption

- **Individuals and groups**
 - Gender, age, social and economic factors, health and genetic factors
- **Behaviors**
 - Drinking and leisure, heavy drinking episodes, drinking and driving, public disorder, violence, sexual activity
- **Contexts**
 - Drinking culture and trends, risk and protective factors, venues and settings, beverage type and quality

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Outcomes of Drinking: Balancing positive and negative outcomes

	Somatic health	Mental health	Social health
Harms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Alcohol dependence •Neurological damage •Liver cirrhosis •Esophageal and laryngeal cancer •Colorectal cancer •Breast cancer •Ischemic stroke •Fetal alcohol syndrome (FAS) •Alcoholic gastritis •Intentional and unintentional injuries (for example, related to traffic accidents, workplace accidents, falls, assault) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Dementia •Alcoholic psychosis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Absenteeism •Suicide, depression •Family disruption •Crime and violence Unwanted / unintended sexual activity •Social costs of chronic harm •Social costs of acute harm
Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Type II diabetes mellitus •Coronary heart disease •Hemorrhagic stroke •Pancreatitis •Osteoporosis •Macular degeneration •Cholelithiasis (gall bladder disease) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Improved cognitive function and memory (especially in elderly) •Vascular dementia •Wellbeing, pleasure •Aid to relaxation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Quality of life •Sociability and social integration •Symbol of adulthood and maturity

Stimson *et al.*, *Drinking in Context*, 2007

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Patterns and Outcomes

- Different patterns of drinking are associated with different outcomes, both positive and negative.
 - For example,
 - Moderate regular drinking
 - Protection for CVD, diabetes II, osteoporosis
 - Sociability, conviviality
 - Heavy drinking episodes
 - Acute harm from accidents and injuries
 - Atrial fibrillation

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Patterns, outcomes and policy

"Given that a mix of measures is necessary to address the range and complexity of problems associated with harmful drinking patterns, policy-makers are faced with the task of determining which efforts are most likely to produce positive results—by preventing and mitigating physical, mental, and social harm at the same time as promoting healthier drinking patterns—in their particular societies, taking into account new trends and changing cultural contexts."

Stimson *et al.* (2007). *Drinking in Context*, Chapter 1.

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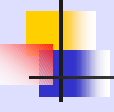
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Opportunities for intervention

- **Population-level measures**
 - Aimed at access and availability of alcohol
 - Insensitive to specific groups and issues; require legislation, structural change, effective enforcement
- **Targeted interventions**
 - Aimed at drinking patterns
 - Responsive to cultural, community needs; target 'at-risk' groups; implementation can be quick and efficient

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Targeted interventions: Individuals and groups

- **Identification of "at risk" groups**
 - Special attention to pregnant women, young people
 - Identification of traits (health, genetic predisposition, problem drinking, dependence)
- **Interventions**
 - Tailored drinking guidelines, recommendations
 - Legal drinking age limits
 - Early identification and brief interventions
 - Information, awareness raising, behavior change
 - Professional education and training
 - Education of parents
 - Education for young people
 - Life skills

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Targeted interventions: Behaviors

- **Problematic drinking behavior**
 - Chronic heavy drinking
 - Heavy episodic drinking
 - Drinking and driving
- **Interventions**
 - Early identification and brief intervention
 - Treatment, where appropriate
 - Education
 - Social norms marketing, life skills
 - Designated driver schemes, enforcement of BAC, breath testing
 - Responsible hospitality, server training


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Targeted interventions: Contexts

- **Problematic venues and contexts**
 - Heavy drinking venues
 - Public order and personal safety
 - Violence
 - Integrity of beverages
- **Interventions**
 - Responsible hospitality, retail and marketing, server training
 - Safety of venues
 - Community involvement

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Targeting drinking patterns: Criteria for interventions

- Resources available *versus* resources needed
- Achievable goals *versus* desired goals
- Realistic expectations *versus* aspirations
- Intended *versus* unintended outcomes

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Interventions aimed at individuals and groups

Feasibility of Targeted Measures (examples)

Intervention	Target population	Procedural requirements	Resources needed
Early ID and brief interventions	Non-dependent problem drinkers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integration into health care system Referral for treatment where appropriate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any healthcare setting, pharmacy, ER, clinic, doctor's office Screening instruments available Training of practitioners
Life skills education	Young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Education or health system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integration into existing programs Community, educators, religious leaders Programs for young people Development and sponsorship of programs

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Interventions aimed at behaviors

Feasibility of Targeted Measures (examples)

Intervention	Target population	Procedural requirements	Resources needed
Social norms marketing	Extreme drinking (especially among young people)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Education or health programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Educators, school and university administrators Integration into existing curricula / programs Diverse sources for funding and implementation Media cooperation

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Interventions aimed at drinking contexts

Feasibility of Targeted Measures (examples)

Intervention	Target population	Procedural requirements	Resources needed
Server training	Licensed premises and other public venues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Possible linkage to licensing requirements Insurance and liability Self-enforcement needed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retail and hospitality sectors Incentives or penalties Training materials and programs Community support
Local accords and community action	Communities / areas where harm indicators are high	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enforcement at community level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community support Local stakeholders and resources as available
Breath testing in high-injury risk workplaces	Workplace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Voluntary codes and implementation by employers, unions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employer support Testing materials Employee training Implementation of penalties Implementation of education, counseling, brief interventions

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Implementation of targeted interventions

- Are not a simple fix to a complex problem. However:
 - Require less intensive resource allocation
 - Are not constrained by government regulatory or approval process
 - Do not require structural change
 - Can involve diverse stakeholders
 - Make us on what is available and accessible
 - Responsive to immediacy of needs and drinking culture

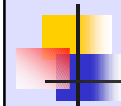
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Summary

- Drinking patterns are not static and largely depend on culture.
- Population-level approaches are insensitive to local variation in drinking patterns and changes over time.
- Targeted interventions are responsive to variation in patterns and integrate both positive and negative outcomes.
- They can be tailored to what is possible and achievable.
- Balanced policies combine population-level strategies with more flexible and responsive targeted measures.



“For the purposes of policy and prevention, a comprehensive alcohol policy needs population-level interventions, but there is also a need to disaggregate populations in order to develop a more nuanced and comprehensive approach to reducing alcohol-related harms.”

Stimson *et al.*, 2007. *Drinking in Context*, Chapter 2.