

**Evidence.
Policy.
Partnership.**



Dear Members of the North South Alcohol Policy Advisory Group,

This newsletter provides updates on recent alcohol research and policy relevant to Ireland and Northern Ireland. The May edition features data from the Northern Ireland Substance Misuse Database, the Health Inequalities Annual Report 2022 and an analysis of alcoholic liver disease in Ireland between 2007 and 2016. This edition also features a study which looked at the challenges in bringing forward policy change for pregnancy warning labels on alcohol products in Australia and New Zealand. There is also a review of how alcohol policy measures in European countries meet the WHO Sustainable Development Goals.

I hope you find the newsletter informative and we look forward to seeing you at our next meeting on 24 May.

Consultation

Extension of MUP on alcohol consultation in Northern Ireland

The Department of Health in Northern Ireland has extended a public consultation on the introduction of Minimum Unit Pricing (MUP) on Alcohol to **Friday 27 May 2022**.

The Department is seeking views and observations on:

- the overall policy aim of reducing the harm alcohol causes;
 - if, of the pricing options considered, MUP for alcohol is the most effective way of achieving the policy aim;
 - what information or evidence should be considered when setting a MUP for alcohol and the level MUP should be set at initially;
 - if the level of the MUP should be varied over time and, if so, how;
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- the mechanisms for setting the MUP, including the formula and how it will be monitored; and
- any other information that **should be taken on board** in respect of the policy or the various impact assessments.

The full consultation document and link to the online response questionnaire can be found on the DoH website at: www.health-ni.gov.uk/MUP-consultation.

[Access the full consultation here](#)

Policy, Data and Research

Northern Ireland Substance Misuse Database: 2020/21 statistics



This report summarises information on people presenting to services with problem drug and/ or alcohol misuse and relates to the 12-month period ending 31 March 2021. In 2020/21, a total of 2,920 clients were recorded on the Substance Misuse Database as having presented to services for problem substance misuse. More than one-third of clients presented to services indicating problem drug use only (36.0%, 1,052); a similar proportion presented indicating problem alcohol use only (35.9%, 1,047); 28.1% of clients presented to services indicating both drug and alcohol misuse (821 clients).

[Access more information here](#)

Sexual violence and harassment in Higher Education Institutes in Ireland: Survey Findings

In 2021, a national survey was carried out among 7,901 students and 3,516 staff to monitor the experiences of students and staff in relation to sexual violence and harassment in higher education institutions (HEIs) in Ireland and their awareness and confidence in HEI policies, processes, and initiatives in the area. Overall, the



survey found that students and staff felt safe from sexual harassment at their HEI. A majority of students were aware and had seen awareness-raising campaigns on consent, sexual violence, or harassment on social media or Students' Union campaigns and posters.

[Access more information here](#)

Alcoholic liver disease hospital admissions and deaths in Irish hospitals, 2007–2016: a retrospective cross-sectional analysis



The Hospital Inpatient Enquiry System was used to analyse the number of hospital discharges for patients with alcoholic liver disease (ALD) and hepatocellular carcinoma (HCC) in Ireland per 100,000 population, the mortality rate associated with ALD and the prevalence of complications associated with ALD. Ireland is seeing a rise in ALD-related hospital admissions and deaths, including HCC which increased three-fold. ALD is a preventable disease and public health interventions are of proven benefit and required to reverse this trend.

[Access the resource here](#)

Northern Ireland Health Inequalities: 2022 Annual Report

Alcohol, smoking and drug-related indicators continued to yield some of the largest health inequalities in Northern Ireland. The inequality gaps for alcohol-related and drug-related admissions, in addition to alcohol-specific mortality, narrowed over the observed period. However, alcohol-specific mortality in the most deprived areas remained around four times that in the least deprived areas and drug-related mortality was over four and half times that in the least deprived areas. While alcohol and drug-



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related admission rates fell the regional level, the opposite was true for alcohol-specific, drug-related and drug misuse death rates.

[Read more here](#)

Global comparisons of responses to alcohol health information labels: A cross sectional study from 29 countries



ScienceDirect

This study explored responses to alcohol health information labels from a cross sectional survey of people who drink alcohol from 29 countries. Respondents were shown seven health information labels (topics were heart disease, liver, cancer, calories, violence, taking two days off and myth of benefits of moderate drinking) and were asked if the information was new, believable, personally relevant, and if it would change their drinking. Country differences in responses to messages can be used to create targeted harm reduction measures as well as inform what should be on labels. The provision of such health information on alcohol product labels may play a role in raising awareness of the risk of drinking.

[Access the article here](#)

The socioeconomic distribution of alcohol-related violence and anti-social behaviour in England and Wales

This study used pooled data from the ONS Crime Survey for England and Wales data (2013/14-2017/18). Findings showed that lower socioeconomic groups experience higher prevalence rates of alcohol-related violence overall, higher incidence and prevalence rates for alcohol-related domestic and acquaintance violence, and are more likely to experience alcohol-related anti-social behaviour weekly or more often. When other violence risk factors such as age are taken into



account, socioeconomic status (SES) remains a significant predictor for experiencing alcohol-related violence overall, particularly alcohol-related domestic and acquaintance violence.

[Read more here](#)

Alcohol Policy

Influencing and implementing mandatory alcohol pregnancy warning labels in Australia and New Zealand



In 2020, Australia and New Zealand implemented a mandatory and evidence-based legal standard for pregnancy warning labels on alcohol products. This article discusses some of the challenges faced in achieving policy change and how these barriers were overcome by public health advocacy groups to build the evidence, counter industry conflicts of interest, consumer test health messages, mobilise community support and gather political support.

[Access the journal here](#)

Alcohol policy measures are an ignored catalyst for achievement of the sustainable development goals

This 'first-of-its-kind' study looked at the voluntary national reviews of 32 European countries submitted to the United Nations' Sustainable Development forum, including the UK. The study found that 28% of the countries did not mention alcohol at all in their reviews; only 25% mentioned one or more of the alcohol policy "best buys" among actions they are taking to reduce alcohol harm; and only five countries referred to the agreed indicator 3.5.2 measuring alcohol per capita consumption in the adult population.

PLOS ONE

Alcohol is an impediment to 14 of the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals, as it is associated with violence, contributes to inequalities, hinders economic growth, and adversely impacts the environment.

[Access the journal article here](#)

Funding Opportunity

Health disparities funding opportunity



A UK funding call opened in May to build community research consortia to address health disparities. The funding call is led by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) and is part of the Mobilising Community Assets to Tackle Health Disparities programme.

Applications are open to UK-based research organisations that are eligible for AHRC funding. Up to £250,000 is available for diverse but complementary groups of academics (for example in public health research, health economics, community asset research or health equity research) to work together with non-academic partners, community organisations and health system partners, to build a research consortium at ICS (or devolved nation equivalent) level.

'Intentions to submit' must be made by **16:00 on 1 June 2022** and the closing date for applications is **20 June 2022**.

A webinar for potential applicants led by Professor Helen Chatterjee, Programme Director, Health Disparities takes place at 1pm on Tuesday 24 May.

You can register to attend

here <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/HealthDisparitiescall>

Upcoming Events



Join the Scottish Health Action on Alcohol Problems (SHAAP) and Scottish Alcohol Research Network (SARN) on **Monday 23 May from 12.30-14.00 BST (UK time)** for another event in their Alcohol Occasionals series: ***Navigating the complexity of harm and care: a qualitative study of self-harm and alcohol use*** with Dr Amy Chandler (University of Edinburgh) and Annie Taylor (Edinburgh Napier University).

[Register now](#)

Tuesday 21 June from 12.30-14.00 BST (UK time):
***'I'm just getting the impression I have to sort myself out':* How people with co-occurring heavy alcohol use and depression describe the care they receive in a fragmented health system - a qualitative study**

Join the Scottish Health Action on Alcohol Problems (SHAAP) and Scottish Alcohol Research Network (SARN) on **Tuesday 21 June from 12.30-14.00 BST (UK time)** for the last in the Alcohol Occasionals series for 2022: *'I'm just getting the impression I have to sort myself out':* How people with co-occurring heavy alcohol use and depression describe the care they receive in a fragmented health system - a qualitative study with Dr Kat Jackson and Dr Amy O'Donnell (Newcastle University).

[Register now](#)

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