Binge Drinking – What is it about and what has an impact?

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Presentation Outline

- What is Binge drinking?
- Why is it important?
- What factors are linked to binge drinking?
- How can we prevent and reduce binge drinking?
High Risk Drinking Patterns

- Binge drinking
- Underage drinking
- Drinking and driving
- Drinking during pregnancy
- Drinking at work
- Drinking prior to DIY, sport and water activity
Binge drinking – broadly defined

Drinking too much on any given occasion that impairs normal function and increases the risk of harm.
Binge drinking - elements

- **Quantity** of alcohol consumed
  - Need to identify grams used
  - WHO says 5+ drinks (60 grams plus)
  - At least one bottle of wine or equivalent

- **Occasion** - time bound
  - Drinks in a row ‘session’

- **Frequency** of heavy drinking occasions

- Context

- Intention
Why is it important?
Increases risk of harm

- Personal harm
  - Accidents
  - Injuries
  - Suicide
  - Unsafe sex
  - Relationship problems
  - Reduced ability to do work
  - More vulnerable to harm from others
Alcohol and Injuries in the Emergency Room

Two-thirds of those who had consumed alcohol prior to injury reported that the accident/injury would not have happened if they had not been drinking.

Source: Hope et al 2005
. . . Increases risk of harm

- Harm to others
  - Assaults
  - Accidents
  - Violence
  - Drinking and driving
  - Family life
  - Unborn child
Experiences of harm from someone else’s drinking

Source: CLAN, Hope et al 2005
High risk Groups

- Adolescents
- College students
- Young adults
- Women of child bearing years
- Pregnant women
- Emergency room patients
- Individuals with
  - Mental health problems
  - Alcohol abuse disorders
European Comparison - adults
Binge drinking at least weekly

Source: Leifman, 2002; Ramstedt & Hope 2003
European Comparison – Binge drinking per 100 drinking Occasions

- Ireland
- UK
- Finland
- Sweden
- Germany
- France
- Italy
What factors are linked to binge drinking?
Environmental factors linked to binge drinking

- Cheap alcohol
- Easy access to alcohol
- Strong alcoholic drinks
- Sweet alcoholic drinks
- High risk sales promotions
- Selling/service to youth
- Selling/service to those intoxicated
- Marketing alcohol as essential for successful lifestyle
Individual factors linked to binge drinking

- Risk taking
- Drug affect
- Group activity
- Lacking self-confidence
- Family dynamics
- Vulnerable to marketing messages
Prevent and Reduce Binge Drinking

High Price by high taxes

Limit high-risk marketing practices

Regulate Availability

Community Mobilisation

Early intervention
High Price by high taxes

- Transnational issue
- Impacts on young and heavy drinkers
- Benefit to Government
- Need EU increase in Minimum alcohol tax levels
Regulate Availability

- Minimum age for alcohol purchase
- Outlet density
- Seller/server training and house policy
- Prohibit service to intoxicated customers
- Consistent Law enforcement
- Alcohol products with low alcohol content
- Server Liability
Limit Marketing

- Reduce exposure of youth to alcohol advertising
  - quantity,
  - location,
  - content
- Cut link between alcohol and sport
- Avoid high-risk alcohol promotions
Avoid High risk promotions

- **Off licence**
  - Volume packs of alcohol
  - Kegs of beer
  - Volume discounts
  - Coupons for free alcohol

- **On premise**
  - Serving size
  - Happy hours
  - Cheap/free alcohol promotions
  - Price specials
  - Cover price and all you can drink
  - Promotion teams encouraging shot consumption
Community Mobilisation

Alcohol action plan

an integrated set of actions tackling

- the community environment
  (social, cultural, policy practices)
- programmes for individuals involved in binge drinking.
Community practices and policies

- Capacity building – awareness, education, training, networking
- Promote safer drinking environment
- Enforcement of alcohol laws
- Test Purchase trials
- Define limits of acceptable marketing practices
- Support organisations to avoid drinks industry sponsorship
- Counter the climate of approval of drunkenness
Early intervention

- Support for Parents
- Systematic alcohol screening across health and social services
- Brief advice
  - Primary care
  - Emergency room
  - Sexual health clinics
  - Anti-natal clinics
  - Court programmes for alcohol related offenders
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