

Fortnightly GINA News, week ending 25th April 2008

Media

Lord Advocate links women's violence to binge drinking

There are "worrying" signs of growing violence by women, including knife-wielding girl gangs and "appalling" torture of other females, according to Scotland's top law officer. Elish Angiolini told MSPs recently that while most offences carried out by females were "acquisitive" crimes such as theft or fraud, more women are being jailed for aggressive behaviour. Speaking at a hearing of Holyrood's Equal Opportunities Committee into women prisoners, she suggested that could be connected to increasing levels of binge drinking among young women. Ms Angiolini said: "Many women are not simply the collaborators, going along with a dominant male partner, being an accessory, carrying knives for boyfriends, assisting in cleaning up after a murder, etc - but are prime movers in some of the cases". "We have seen increasing signs of groups of young girls using knives, against predominantly other young girls, and carrying weapons." Ms Angiolini said the violence was "aligned with" increased drinking by young women.

<http://www.theherald.co.uk/display.var.2217352.0.0.php?utag=48611>

Violence on streets linked to drinking in pregnancy

Violent behaviour in young men is closely linked to drinking in pregnancy by their mothers, according to Dr Harry Burns, Scotland's chief medical officer. Dr Burns told MSPs he believes foetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD) is a key element in behaviour problems once the babies grow up. The problems caused by pregnant women drinking are known to include behavioural and learning difficulties, and the health chief thinks it is directly linked to anti-social behaviour on Scotland's streets. Dr Burns has said women should not drink at all while pregnant. He said the only major study of prevalence of the FASD problem in Europe, including the more serious cases known as foetal alcohol syndrome, carried out in Italy, would not pick up the specific problems of Scottish drinking habits. That found up to 4% of schoolchildren were affected. "I suspect that significantly underestimates the problem of FASD in Scotland," Dr Burns said of the Italian research. "I would bet the incidence of FASD is very high in young men being violent."

<http://www.theherald.co.uk/display.var.2203135.0.0.php?utag=48611>

UK move worsens maternal habits

Women from ethnic minorities are more likely to smoke or drink during pregnancy the longer they have lived in the UK. The researchers studied 6,478 mothers of white British or Irish origin and 2,110 mothers from ethnic minority groups who had either migrated to the UK themselves, or were first or second generation immigrants. The British Medical Journal study also showed they were more likely to stop breastfeeding sooner. Women from ethnic minority groups are known to be less likely to smoke or consume alcohol than the general population, but the researchers looked at how living in a Westernised society affected their habits. Professor Catherine Law, of the Institute of Child Health, said: "Smoking and alcohol consumption rates did vary between ethnic minorities, but in all the groups studied, the rates of consumption were increasing.

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/health/7340401.stm>

Women drinkers 'face cancer risk'

Women who drink above the government's recommended limit are 50% more likely to develop breast cancer, the Department of Health has said. A £10m advertising campaign has been launched targeting middle-aged women who might underestimate their drinking. A health department report, which has yet to be published, says women who drink more than 14 units of alcohol a week are at increased risk. Cancer Research says alcohol causes about 2,000 breast cancer cases a year.

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/health/7309135.stm>

Drunkorexia - too much booze and too little food - is affecting more and more women

Do you save up your Weight Watchers points, living all day on chewing gum, cucumber and Ryvita, so you can blow them all on a bottle of wine at night? Are you the sort who knows that after two glasses of wine, you won't feel like eating dinner, so why bother cooking it? If any of these apply to you, then you might want to address the fact that you have a zeitgeisty confluence of drinking too much and disordered eating. In short, you might well be a drunkorexic. Drunkorexia has captured the public's imagination. "It's socially acceptable to be drunk, but it's not okay to be fat," says Ian Marber, a nutritionist who sees signs of a drunkorexic lifestyle among his smart female clients. One comprehensive study, Food for Thought – Substance Abuse and Eating Disorders suggested that people with eating disorders are five times more likely to be substance abusers, while substance abusers are 11 times more likely to have eating disorders.

http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/life_and_style/health/features/article3570712.ece

Like all drunks, we're in denial about reality

More than a third of the women interviewed in the Sunday Independent/ Millward Brown IMS poll, 36%, want easy access to buying alcohol. 15% of these women admit that they'd like to be able to buy alcohol 24 hours a day. As female celebrities glamourise alcohol addiction and, the media, collude by plugging their books and failing to ask tough questions around their addictions. This is a minimisation of the truth. Alcoholism is a disease of denial. "Women are using their talents to dolly-up at the bar and match men's bad drinking habits and no one is commenting on it," observes Stephen Rowen, director of the Rutland Centre, which treats alcohol addiction.

<http://www.independent.ie/opinion/analysis/like-all-drunks-were-in-denial-about-reality-1346147.html>

Binge drinking caused teen's liver failure at 14

Natasha Farnham, who is now 18, told how her binge drinking caused her liver to fail at the age of 14. She is believed to be the youngest person in Britain to be diagnosed with alcohol-related liver failure, claims the charity British Liver Trust. She started drinking at 12 and within a year was consuming up to six bottles of wine a day. Two years later she was taken to hospital after drinking 16 bottles of wine, cider and spirits in three days. Doctors diagnosed liver failure - usually suffered by middle-aged alcoholics - and told her to stop drinking. But she ignored the warning and has gone into rehabilitation at the age of 18. Miss Farnham now has memory loss problems. "I didn't think my drinking was a problem because all my friends were getting wasted as well," she said. "I suppose I thought I looked grown-up and would drink as much as possible - sometimes even passing out.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2008/04/15/nhealth215.xml>

Boozy Betty: a warning of the effects of alcohol

A prevailing image of students has tended to be that of the Boozy Betty - she's out drinking with friends, hard-drinking into the wee hours, she can't remember how she got home and her grades are beginning to suffer as a result. The Boozy Betty campaign has been so successful the National Union of Students in Scotland has formally endorsed it to be promoted throughout the country. The campaign was launched by Action on Alcohol and Drugs in Edinburgh in November, who distributed posters and cards, as well as training student wardens and welfare staff on alcohol issues. Researchers found 36% of female students drank eight to 16 units on both Friday and Saturday nights - four to five times the recommended amount.

http://www.sundayherald.com/news/heraldnews/display.var.2210582.0.boozy_betty_a_warning_of_the_effects_of_alcohol.php

Drink-fuelled antics? Not our fault, say students

College leaders have attacked firms organising pub crawls. But the companies say it is student unions themselves that foster the worst excesses. The image of blonde student lifted her glazed eyes to the camera, held up her drink and smiled. She was wearing stockings with a lace slip and

had ripped her T-shirt in half to reveal her bra. She was on an organised pub crawl in which hundreds of undergraduates lurched from bar to bar as they cheered, laughed and downed drink after drink - a sight which seems typical of many university towns. But it is a stereotypical image that students are hoping to shed. The National Union of Students will call for a campaign to promote 'responsible drinking' on campuses across the country, a motion to be put forward at its annual conference.

<http://education.guardian.co.uk/higher/news/story/0,,2269356,00.html>

Wine is worse for the brain than beer, research finds

Drinking too much wine damages the brain more than beer or spirits, scientists have discovered. New research on the long-term effects of heavy drinking reported in the medical journal *Alcohol & Alcoholism*, shows that the hippocampus, the part of the brain involved in memory, spatial tasks and many other functions, was more than 10% smaller in those whose tipple was wine than in those who favoured beer. The researchers carry out detailed brain scans of men and women diagnosed with alcoholism and compared them with brain scans of healthy adults.

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/science/wine-is-worse-for-the-brain-than-beer-research-finds-796604.html>

Wine: Girl power

Those for whom every day is Valentine's Day may be interested in a new range of wines aimed at women developed by a French wine merchant. WineSight has selected about 30 French wines under the label Sublimelle, "parce que la femme est Sublimelle". It boasts "no need for images of lingerie", so the fact that a French lingerie label of the same name adorns such fine brands as Forplay and Leg Avenue, is presumably a coincidence. Selected by a man, Frédéric Auriol, the range offers wines for a variety of occasions, "whether it is a girls' night out, an individual tasting, a romantic dinner, after love-making, or a business success". According to a report from the Office of National Statistics, men will most commonly drink with friends, then their spouse or partner. Women, however, prefer to drink with their loved one.

<http://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/food-and-drink/features/wine-girl-power-784708.html>

Research and Policy

Britons can't imagine a life without booze

Most people in Britain do not believe they could lead their lives enjoyably or successfully without alcohol - but don't consider this to be a problem either, according to recent research. The fear of a life without alcohol is so endemic that most adults say they are scared by the idea of socialising, relaxing, taking part in any celebration or trying to have a good night's sleep without drinking. New research by Alcohol Concern differentiates between the reasons why men and women develop a reliance on alcohol. Male drinking is, they found, a product of Western cultural values Frank Soodeen of Alcohol Concern said. 'Alcohol has economic and symbolic value. It functions as a symbol of earning power and social exchange and is significant as an expression of gender identity and position within society, peer groups and families. Women, however, are more responsive to the emotional contexts in which they drink, using alcohol to cope with the demands of parenthood, to match their partner's drinking habits or to deal with the stress of having to balance home obligations with a career.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2008/mar/23/drugsandalcohol.health>

Tackling Violence Against Women

Funding of £22 million for services to tackle violence against women has been announced. On a visit to a women's refuge in the east-end of Glasgow, Ms Robison announced that over the next three years, 41 children's services will receive a share of the £11.6 million Children's Services Women's Aid Fund (CSWAF). Public Health Minister Shona Robison also confirmed 73 projects will benefit from the £10.5 million Violence Against Women Funding Stream (VAWFS). These

funds are part of the Scottish Government's overall investment of £44.54 million to tackle all forms of violence against women. The 73 VAWFS projects receiving funding include:

- A support service for young women survivors of childhood sexual abuse who are homeless or at risk of being homeless, run by SAY Women in Glasgow (£103, 289)
- Support service for Muslim women experiencing domestic abuse, run by Amina in Glasgow (£270,293)
- Work to develop a network of violence against women prevention professionals in Scotland, run by Zero Tolerance in Edinburgh (£279,701)
- Support for women and children experiencing domestic abuse, run by Barnardo's Scotland in Dundee (£148,165)

<http://cci.scot.nhs.uk/News/Releases/2008/04/15140544>

Alcohol and intimate partner violence: key findings from the research

Violence between current and former partners is a considerable public health and criminal justice problem. Many incidents result in injury and contribute to physical and mental health problems, particularly for women victims. Alcohol is an important dimension in such violence. Many perpetrators have been drinking before committing an assault and many may be alcohol dependant. It is also common for victims to have alcohol problems. A new report presents key findings from published UK and international research on the relationship between alcohol and intimate partner violence. Key points include:

- Offender-only drinking is common in incidents of intimate partner violence, whilst victim-only drinking is rare.
- Alcohol abuse is common among perpetrators and 'problem' drinkers predict intimate partner violence over time.
- Heavy drinkers are at increased risk of intimate partner violence victimisation. Many women develop alcohol 'problems' following victimisation.

<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs04/r216.pdf>

Prospective Prediction of Women's Sexual Victimization by Intimate and Non-intimate Male Perpetrators.

Although behavioral risk factors such as substance use have been hypothesized to increase women's vulnerability to sexual victimization, prospective studies provide mixed empirical support. In the current prospective study, the authors considered substance use, sexual activity, and sexual assertiveness as predictors of sexual victimization from intimate partners and non-intimate perpetrators. Among a representative community sample of women ages 18-30 years (N = 927), 17.9% reported sexual victimization over 2 years, the majority by an intimate partner. Low sexual refusal assertiveness, drug use, and prior intimate partner victimization predicted intimate partner sexual victimization. Heavy episodic drinking and number of sexual partners predicted victimization from non-intimates. The finding that there are different risk factors for sexual victimization from intimates versus non-intimates suggests the need for tailored prevention strategies

<http://content.apa.org/journals/ccp/75/1/52>

Events

30th April (2 - 4pm), Women in Recovery – Seminar Series, Stirling

This session will examine gender and ethnicity differences in the recovery process, access to recovery services and implications for responses to women and minority ethnic groups. Do women experience a different recovery trajectory? And what of black and minority ethnic groups? Do the barriers to services which they experience result in new or alternative pathways? Keynote speakers -Betsy Thom and Jane Fountain.

For further information phone 01786 467737 or 01786 467723 or see flyer or web link

<http://www.dass.stir.ac.uk/old-site/DRUGS/pathways/index2.html>

3rd May, 10am – 2.30pm, Glasgow Royal Concert Hall

An event for young women aged between 16 – 25 years. The aim of the event is to discuss the participation of young women within Scottish life. Issues being discussed on the day will include; Employment; Sexual Health; the Alcohol Intake of young women in Scotland and participation of young women at both local and national level. The conference will give every young woman attending the chance to have her voice heard and hopefully influence policy, on issues which have a direct effect on her life All travel costs will be paid

For further information contact Isabelle.gray@scottishwomensconvention.org or phone 07795262634 www.scottishwomensconvention.org

2nd May 2008, Is Gender Relevant? Edinburgh

This study day will seek to explore and explain the terminology and rationale of a gender based analysis of domestic abuse, outlining the gendered legacy, context, meanings and impact of domestic abuse, and placing these within a wider contextual framework of gender inequality and violence against women.

For further information contact Erica Brock on 0131 226 6606 or erica.brock@scottishwomensaid.org.uk

8th May 2008, Working With Survivors of Rape & Sexual Abuse, Edinburgh

Aimed at workers who are likely to come into contact with survivors of rape and sexual abuse and who seek to have a deeper understanding of the spectrum of sexual violence and the effects it has on those who experience it. The session will also address issues around consent and dealing with a disclosure.

For further information contact Erica Brock on 0131 226 6606 or erica.brock@scottishwomensaid.org.uk

9th - 11th May 2008, The Addiction Conference “Love and Baggage”, Bath

Unhooked Thinking asks the fundamental and radical question: what actually is addiction? But it goes further asking – what is the relationship between love and addiction? How does baggage of our relationships become the spawning ground of addiction? The conference is a space to learn and forge ideas, practices and outlooks, new and old. An Unhooked attitude will be applied, discussed and played within fields beyond what is normally called “addiction”, for example marriage and the family. To these ends the conference will explore participatory and creative modes of conferring using the Open Space methodology. Unhooked Thinking is so much more than a conference; it is an exploration, a search for more satisfactory and coherent approaches.

For more information contact www.unhookedthinking.com

16th May 2008, Intersectionality & Addressing Multiple & Complex Needs, Edinburgh

This study day will consider how intersectionality, as a conceptual framework, can help in understanding the multi-faceted and often complex lives of women experiencing domestic abuse. It will address how considering class, race, sexuality, age etc along with a gender lens helps builds a comprehensive and more nuanced understanding of women's lives.

For further information contact Erica Brock on 0131 226 6606 or erica.brock@scottishwomensaid.org.uk

21st May - "and for 39 years I got on with it": Older Women & Domestic Abuse in Scotland, Edinburgh

What do we know about older women and domestic abuse? Who are they? How many of them are there? Do their experiences and needs differ significantly from those of younger women? Key note speaker: Dr Marsha Scott (project researcher)

For further information contact Erica Brock on 0131 226 6606 or erica.brock@scottishwomensaid.org.uk

23rd May 2008, Trauma, Recovery and Domestic Abuse, Edinburgh

Looks at the psychological and mental health impact of living with a perpetrator of domestic abuse. The focus will be particularly on the range of effects of trauma and on models of working with and supporting survivors at different stages in the process of recovery. The session has been designed for those who have already undertaken training about the dynamics of domestic abuse.

For further information contact Erica Brock on 0131 226 6606 or erica.brock@scottishwomensaid.org.uk

28th May - What's Love Got To Do With It? Edinburgh

Two powerful dramatic performances which explore the impacts of domestic abuse on a survivor and the motivations and experiences of a perpetrator, with a view to enabling practitioners to truly understand the dynamics of domestic abuse of those living with it.

For further information contact Erica Brock on 0131 226 6606 or erica.brock@scottishwomensaid.org.uk

30th May 2008, Widening the Agenda

This study day will consider the implications of widening the political agenda beyond domestic abuse to addressing violence against women and gender based violence. The day will draw on international case studies and research to enable delegates to work through implications for local change.

For further information contact Erica Brock on 0131 226 6606 or erica.brock@scottishwomensaid.org.uk

Resources

Surviving Domestic Violence: Gender, Poverty and Agency

This book sheds new light on women's personal agency in their journey to secure a safe haven for themselves and their children. Using a feminist lens, the author analyses the primary data to explore and interrogate seven significant social dimensions of violence: power, emotion, children, home, economic resource, informal and community support to examine the interrelationship of gender and class in framing the physical, psychological and material consequences of domestic abuse. A certain premise of the book is that domestic violence is shrouded in shame and silence, and, perhaps more importantly, the manifestations of the gendered nature of the legal and welfare systems create barriers for women in gaining effective support to secure safety for their children and themselves.

Author Paula Wilcox (2007), Published by Oxford University Press, ISBN 1 4039 4113 0

Funding

Funding for gender mainstreaming in national policies and programmes

The European Commission has issued a new call for proposals under its Employment and Social Affairs (PROGRESS) programme. The aim of this call for proposals is to support activities for the improvement of gender mainstreaming in national programmes and policies. This is a restricted call for proposals open to national authorities or other bodies responsible for gender equality and concerns the financing of national initiatives designed to; enhance awareness of the importance of gender mainstreaming in national policies as an effective contributor to equality between women and men and to better governance; improve knowledge of the key concepts and ensure a better understanding of gender mainstreaming in policies and programmes; and develop the necessary tools and distribute them to stakeholders, thus ensuring a more long term effect. Measures which may be financed under this call for proposals include seminars/workshops, training sessions and the design and distribution of tools (educational and methodological

material, handbooks, impact assessment guides, reports, etc.). The total budget available is 1,050,000 euros and the maximum grant that can be applied for is 90,000 euros. The closing date for applications is the 23rd May 2008.

http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/emplweb/tenders/tenders_en.cfm?id=2905

Network News

Do you have any information you would like to share with the GINA network?

I would love to hear from you if you have examples of best practice, studies of interest, information on services or up coming events etc. If so please get in touch.

The next GINA newsletter will be distributed in May 2008.

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