

Fortnightly GINA News, week ending 28th March 2008

Media

Women targeted in drink campaign

Middle-aged women will be targeted in a hard-hitting anti-alcohol campaign after research found that just one large glass of wine per night could increase the risk of breast cancer by 60 per cent. Up to 2,000 women every year die from breast cancer linked to drinking, with a growing number also suffering other cancers, liver damage and fertility problems. Rising levels of alcohol consumption, particularly among the middle classes, have been blamed in part on an increase in the strength of many wines and a fashion for larger glasses, leading to confusion over how many units of alcohol each glass contains. The Government has responded with a £10 million advertising campaign that aims to educate women about the health risks of drinking and the need to be aware of how much alcohol they are consuming.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2008/03/22/ndrink122.xml>

Educational divide amongst female binge drinkers

Educated British women binge-drink early in life but those with few qualifications turn to alcohol much later, according to new research. A study has found the binge-drinking patterns of British women were clearly defined by age and education: educated women binge-drink in their 20s, but generally curb their habits by their 40s. The reverse is true of women with little education, whose binge-drinking was more likely to take off in their 40s, according to the study, published in the Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health. Possible reasons include less-educated women having children earlier, women experiencing different social circles and a variety of jobs leading to contrasting drinking habits. The study showed that highly educated women were about one-third more likely than women with no or few qualifications to binge-drink at the age of 23. For women in their 40s, that had reversed, and women with no or few qualifications were more than twice as likely as their highly qualified peers to be binge-drinking by the age of 42, the study found.

http://www.theherald.co.uk/search/display.var.1130162.0.educational_divide_amongst_female_binge_drinkers.php

Boozy Betty serves up lessons on drink risks

She is the hard-drinking, hard-living poster girl around campus. But with weight problems, poor grades and a raft of sexually transmitted diseases, Boozy Betty is hardly a good role model. The stereotypical party girl was introduced at Heriot-Watt University to remind students about the downside of drinking too much. Now the National Union of Students is considering rolling her out nationwide, while Heriot-Watt is preparing a similar campaign aimed at male students. Research about alcohol warnings revealed students at the university were more concerned about acne or a beer belly, rather than liver disease or kidney failure. So Heriot-Watt's student welfare staff created Boozy Betty for a series of posters, leaflets and information cards to be distributed around campus and pubs. Anna Carmichael, 22, French student, Morningside: "We all know about the dangers but most people ignore them. Women should drink less than men for their health but most like to be seen to hold their own."

<http://edinburghnews.scotsman.com/topstories/Boozy-Betty-serves-up-lessons.3643876.jp>

How a large glass of wine turned us into a nation of big drinkers

People from professional and high-income households are the heaviest drinkers in Britain, and Scots drink less than people in England, figures revealed. A report by the Office for National Statistics found that, on average, men drank 18.7 units a week during 2006, compared with 9 units for women. But this rose to 22.9 units a week for men and 12.5 for women in the top socio-

economic households. By contrast, households described as routine and manual got through an average 11.6 units per person per week – 16.7 for men and 7.1 for women. The report will be a wake-up call to Britain's high-earners, who were shown to be the biggest drinkers. The ONS found that men in households with a gross weekly income of at least £1,000 drank on average 22.1 units per week compared with women at 12.2 units. This fell to 17.8 units for men and 6.1 for women in households with an income of £200 or less.

<http://news.scotsman.com/latestnews/How-a-large-glass-of.3699667.jp>

Babies join victims in North-East Drink Crisis

Two babies and a one-year-old were among dozens of youngsters admitted to north-east hospitals suffering from what were described as alcohol-related illnesses, the Press and Journal can reveal. Shock figures obtained under freedom of information legislation show that, in the last three years, 165 under-16s have been admitted to NHS Grampian hospitals after drinking. A large percentage of them were 13-year-olds - 59 in total. However, the most shocking figure to emerge is that two infants under the age of one, a one-year-old and two 10-year-olds had to be treated in hospital for the effects of alcohol.

http://www.redorbit.com/news/health/1271131/babies_join_victims_in_northeast_drink_crisis/index.html?source=r_health

Alcohol ban advised for pregnancy

Women should not drink any alcohol during pregnancy, NHS adviser the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) has said. It brings NICE in line with government advice and replaces previous guidance saying small daily amounts were fine. However, NICE concedes there is no evidence to support the change. NICE, which is responsible for the promotion of good health in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, decided to tighten its guidance partly because of concern that people are now drinking more than in the past. NICE deputy chief executive Dr Gillian Leng said people, and in particular women, were drinking more and the NHS advisory body wanted to send a "clear message". "I think it reinforces the advice which came out last year. Women should be advised not to drink."

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/health/7312708.stm>

Warning Labels for Alcohol on the Horizon

Food Standards Australia New Zealand called for comment on an application to amend the Food Standards Codes to require labelling of alcohol beverages with a pregnancy health advisory label. The draft Guidelines includes a clear message that alcohol consumption when planning pregnancy, during pregnancy and breastfeeding is not recommended. Alcohol Healthwatch Director Rebecca Williams says that warning labels form an essential part of a strategic approach to preventing Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD). There is no known safe consumption level so abstinence is the only way to ensure that alcohol is not damaging a baby's health. Drinking alcohol during pregnancy can cause irreparable damage to the brain of the developing baby and a range of other effects known as FASD

<http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/GE0712/S00050.htm>

Ladies' vodka sparks binge fears

Igor Volodin believes vodka is no more harmful than chocolate. He is proud to be the first Russian to produce the spirit in a special women's version, designed to be sipped with salad after a workout in the gym. Touted as a glamour product for upwardly mobile women in booming Russia, Damskaya, or "Ladies' vodka", worries doctors who fear a fresh wave of female alcoholics in a country already suffering one of the world's worst drink problems. Yuri Sorokin, a psychologist running a Moscow rehabilitation centre for drug addicts and alcoholics, said 60 per cent of those he treated for alcoholism were women, including the wives of Russian millionaires. "I believe that female alcoholism is a huge problem in Russia," he said. "I believe it is as huge and hidden as the underwater part of an iceberg."

<http://www.smh.com.au/news/world/ladies-vodka-sparks-binge-fears/2008/03/20/1205602581844.html>

Research and Policy

New UK statistics on smoking and drinking

Men are drinking twice as much alcohol as women according to new figures from the Office of National Statistics – 18.7 units a week, on average, compared with 9 units.

- Men were more likely than women to have drunk alcohol on at least one day in the previous week: 71% of men and 56% of women had done so.
- 21% of men compared with 11% of women had drunk on at least 5 of the previous 7 days
- Men and women in households classified as 'routine and manual' drank less (11.6 units per week), on average, than those in other types of households. Those in 'managerial and professional' households drank the most (15.1 units a week).
- While 33% of men and 22% of women drank in a pub or bar in the previous week, 50% of men and 52% of women had drunk an alcoholic drink in their own home.
- The most common companions for men and women were spouse or partner (41% and 40% respectively) and friends (45% and 38% respectively).

<http://www.statistics.gov.uk/pdffdir/ghs0108.pdf>

Essential Care - A Report on the Approach Required to Maximise Opportunity for Recovery from Problem Substance Use in Scotland *Domestic Abuse (section 2.4.2)*

In police recorded incidents of domestic abuse, 91% of those who experience it are female and 91% of perpetrators are men. It can be perpetrated by partners or ex-partners and can include physical abuse, sexual abuse and mental/emotional abuse. A study of hospital records found that women who had experienced domestic violence were 15 times more likely to develop problem alcohol use and 9 times more likely to develop problem drug use. There is also evidence showing that rates of problem drug and alcohol use rose after the first episode of violence and may have been a consequence of the problem use. Women in violent situations may turn to substances as a form of self-medication and relief from the pain, fear, isolation and guilt associated with violence. Research suggests that up to 70% of men who physically assault their partners do so under the influence of alcohol and up to 20% do so under the influence of other substances.

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2008/03/20144059/0>

Landmark Cancer Report – Obesity and alcohol major risk factors for cancer

People should aim to be at the lower end of the healthy weight range and either not drink or cut down their alcohol consumption, according to a landmark report published by the World Cancer Research Fund (WCRF). On alcohol the reports says that the evidence that alcohol is a cause of cancer is stronger than ever before. Additional evidence has come to light that alcoholic drinks can increase the risk of a number of cancers, including breast and colon cancer. The WCRF report says that any alcohol consumption can increase the risk of cancer, though there is some evidence to suggest that small amounts of alcohol can help protect against heart disease. Therefore, people who choose to drink should limit their consumption of alcoholic drinks to no more than 2 drinks for men and 1 for women a day. This is roughly equivalent to the standard guidance in the UK that men should not exceed 4 drinks per day and women 3 drinks per day.

[Alcohol Alert, Issue 1, 2008 \(page 16\)](#)

Girls More Susceptible to Friends' Drinking

Teens who have friends who drink are more likely to drink themselves, many studies have found, but this influence may be especially strong for girls, a study of 4,700 twins has found. Male and female teens who have opposite-sex friends who drink are likely to drink even more. The researchers, led by Danielle Dick of Virginia Commonwealth University, examined a twin study of behavioral development and health-risk factors from Finland to analyse the association between friendship characteristics and alcohol use

<http://alcoholism.about.com/b/2008/01/17/girls-more-susceptible-to-friends-drinking.htm>

We're drinking more than we thought we were

A new more accurate way of calculating alcohol consumption shows that drinkers, especially women, are drinking substantially more than was previously believed. For Women, the estimate of average weekly consumption has increased by 45% from 6.5 units per week to 9.4. This is a much larger increase than the estimate for men, which increased by 26% from 15.8 units per week to 19.9. The percentage of men exceeding weekly limits was previously thought to be 24% and is now believed to be 31%, an increase of 32%. The equivalent figures for women drinking more than the weekly limit of 14 units was previously 13% and is now 21%, an increase of 65%. The measure that has been used for binge drinking, namely the % of people who drink more than twice the daily limit, increased from 19% to 23% for men an increased of 24%, and from 8 % to 15% for women, an increase of 89%. These increases were smaller for the youngest age group, 16-24 year olds, who are less likely to drink wine. In this age group, the estimate of percentage of men 'binge drinking' increased from 30% to 32%, an increase of 9%, and the estimate for women increased from 22% to 27%, and increase of 25%.

[Alcohol Alert, Issue 1, 2008 \(pages 17-18\)](#)

Getting it Right for Women – Service provider survey

Clouds House has been treating men and women in a mixed-sex facility for nearly 25 years. They undertook a project to evaluate how responsive the treatment programme is to female clients. "we held in mind that women have a number of issues specific to them which relate closely to their vulnerability to relapse. We were also aware of the evidence that many women can benefit from mixed-gender treatment if adequate attention is given to female specific issues. We include abuse, eating disorders and self-harm in this category". One theme emerged that indicated the women wanted their single-sex groups to be held more frequently and for longer. At the time the questionnaire was issued, the women's group was held once a week for one hour. Feedback showed their strong appreciation of the time allocated for them to talk specifically with other women about the problems they have encountered throughout their lives. Many of them reported that residential treatment was the first place where they felt safe enough to talk openly.

http://www.drinkanddrugs.net/features/feb1108/getting_it_right_for_women.pdf

Babies 'develop taste for alcohol in the womb'

Babies are at greater risk of becoming alcoholics in later life if their mothers drink while pregnant, research warns. Children are more likely to become alcoholics if they have been exposed to alcohol in the womb and drink again in their early teens, according to Steven Youngentob, from the State University of New York Developmental Ethanol Research Centre. Mr Youngentob said: "There is a period during adolescence when if they get a second exposure to alcohol it reinforces the effect." The study found the propensity for alcohol addiction subsided as the adolescents matured into adults, if they did not drink when they were growing up. Mr Youngentob added: "There is no time during pregnancy when it is safe to drink."

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2007/12/13/nbaby313.xml>

Events

Closing date 4th April 2008, PhD Research Studentship, Gendered identities and alcohol consumption among young adults: a qualitative study, Glasgow

Applicants should have a 1st or 2:1 Honours degree in a social science subject. Experience in gender studies or awareness of young adults' health behaviours would be an advantage. This studentship carries a stipend of £12,608 pa and offers an opportunity to undertake a PhD using qualitative research methods in a supportive and lively research environment. For further information about the unit visit www.sphsu.mrc.ac.uk

For informal enquires about the studentship please contact Carol Emslie or Helen Sweeting on 0141 357 3949 or e-mail c.emslie@sphsu.mrc.ac.uk or helen@sphsu.mrc.ac.uk. Apply at

<http://jobs.mrc.ac.uk> completing cover letter section and attaching your CV or call 01793 301312, quoting ref number SPHS08/112.

24th to 25th April 2008 meeting the needs of Diverse Populations: Hard to reach or Easy to Ignore? Brighton

The Royal College of General Practitioners sex, drugs and HIV Task Group organises a conference aimed to help meet the needs of groups who are excluded: the homeless, sex workers, people from black and ethnic minority groups, and older people. We will also look at the needs of other groups it is easy to forget, for example steroid users, stimulant users and the children of drug users. Conference will include: - formal conference sessions, workshops, films and dedicated networking opportunities.

For more information visit www.healthcare-events.co.uk

'Thinking Beyond the Individual': Working with Families and Substance Misuse (12-16 May 2008 22-26 September 2008 17-21 November 2008)

Families Plus (Professional Development) with the NTA due to publish guidelines on the importance of working with families and carers, this course offers training in:

- Evidence based practice
- Exploring theoretical models of working with families
- Involving families/carers in the treatment of the substance misuser.
- Developing services to family members/carers in their own right

This course is accredited by the University of Bath

For more information contact admin.familiesplus@actionaddiction.org.uk or Tel: 01747 832015 or Families Plus , Jill Cunningham House, East Knoyle, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP3 6BE

09th to 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 visit www.unhookedthinking.com

10 June 2008, Drugs and Alcohol Scotland, Braehead Arena, Glasgow

This national event opens its doors to some 1,500 people and aims to bring visitors together from across both sectors and regions to debate the latest issues. This one-day event, comprising a full and comprehensive seminar programme and a large exhibition, will provide a unique opportunity for professionals and managers involved in preventing and treating substance misuse, service users and those interested in joining the profession to come together to debate the big issues, share best practice and network.

For more information contact Pavilion on 0870 890 1080 or email info@pavpub.com

Resources

Helping Families, Domestic Violence Victims

Alcohol Concern has been awarded £424,000 over three years by the Big Lottery Fund to work with alcohol services wanting to improve their work with families and domestic violence. The project should build capacity within alcohol services to work more effectively with families where alcohol use is an issue and to address domestic violence. This will enable the services to make

better assessments of the risks of harm to children and their parents, prepare them to work jointly with children's needs and domestic violence issues.

[Addiction Today March/ April Vol 19 No 111](#) (page 11)

Highs & Lows: Canadian Perspectives on Women and Substance Use

Introducing a multidisciplinary resource for health-care providers, researchers and community agencies. *Highs & Lows* brings together the views and experience of nearly 100 experts on women's substance use. And while many people still associate 'substance abuse' with illegal drugs, *Highs & Lows* emphasizes that it's the legal ones - tobacco and alcohol - that continue to pose the greatest threats to women's health. Topics include: - locating women's substance abuse, interconnections, pregnancy and mothering, responding with programmes and challenges and opportunities.

http://www.camh.net/Publications/CAMH_Publications/highs_lows.html

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 April 08.

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