

# Alcohol Prevention in Settings – Alcohol Prevention in Communities

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# Outline of the presentation

- What is prevention of alcohol-related problems?
- Is alcohol-specific prevention effective?
- Community-based prevention

# What is prevention of alcohol-related harms?

Prevention is goal-oriented activity, which

- promotes healthy lifestyles
- promotes reductions of the availability and accessibility of alcohol
- influences knowledge and attitudes
- helps to strengthen protective factors
- helps to decrease risk factors

# Alcohol-specific and non-specific prevention

## Alcohol-specific prevention

Aims to influence the amount and patterns of alcohol use.

## Non-specific prevention

Works indirectly by increasing factors that protect an individual against harm of alcohol use.

# Target of prevention

Whole populations

or

Segments of the population (eg. young people)

or

Groups at particular risk for harms related to alcohol use (eg. pregnant women, people with health problems)

# Working with different levels of social life

Societal level

Community level

Family and other close social ties

Individual

# Societal level

International agreements

National legislation

Administration

Economy and social equality

Public discussion and information

# Community level

## Social availability

- enforcement of laws and regulations
- attitudes, norms, cultural patterns

## Influencing demand of alcohol

## Mobilizing and increasing awareness and knowledge

# Family and other close ties

Support and help in different stages of family life

# Individuals

Information

Support

Early intervention

Treatment and help



# Choosing effective strategies; scientific evidence

Several attempts have been made to summarise the information from expanding evaluation literature. (Babor et al 2003; Edwards et al 1996; Andréasson 2002; Heather et Stockwell 2004).

# Criteria for evidence

- Evidence of effectiveness
- Breadth of research support
- Extent of testing across diverse countries and cultures
- Relative cost of the intervention in terms of time, resources and cultures

# Effectiveness and feasibility of alcohol-specific prevention (1)

## Taxation and pricing

Effectiveness: Effective in most circumstances and in all drinker groups

Feasibility: Cost to implement is low, but often politically difficult to achieve. Tax revenues are a source of income for the state, which could add to the political interest.

# Effectiveness and feasibility of alcohol-specific prevention (2)

## Regulating physical availability

Examples: minimum age of purchase, density of outlets, hours of sales.

Effectiveness: High to low; the total cost of obtaining the drink is decisive for how much is purchased.

Feasibility: Several possibilities, most forms can be politically difficult, but once accepted, regulation can be carried out with low cost.

# Effectiveness and feasibility of alcohol-specific prevention (3)

## Altering the drinking context

Examples: not serving to the intoxicated persons, voluntary codes for practices in restaurants and shops, training, community mobilization.

Effectiveness: Promising, more research is required. Works best when campaigns are combined with surveillance.

Feasibility: Often carried out in project-form. There is a need of sustainable structures.

# Effectiveness and feasibility of alcohol-specific prevention (4)

Drinking-driving counter measures

of Effectiveness: High when combined with the threat of getting caught.

but Feasibility: Good, accepted, costs low or moderate have to be continuous.

# Effectiveness and feasibility of alcohol-specific prevention (5)

## Education and persuasion

Effectiveness: May increase knowledge and change attitudes, but does not have sustained effect on drinking.

Feasibility: Expensive. However, needed to support other policy measures, and each generation has a right to be informed about alcohol and its effects in a truthful fashion.

# Effectiveness and feasibility of alcohol-specific prevention (6)

## Regulating alcohol promotion

Effectiveness: advertizing shapes childrens' attitudes and conception of alcohol.

Feasibility: Laws regulating advertizing. Also, industry's self-regulation is a possibility, but this is difficult to enforce or to monitor.

# Effectiveness and feasibility of alcohol-specific prevention (7)

Treatment and early intervention

public Effectiveness: Helps individuals, and has also health impact.

have Feasibility: Even if expensive, important. Individuals a right to be treated.

# Effectiveness and feasibility of alcohol-specific prevention (8)

The process of effective prevention

Separate policies are not as effective as systematic multi-method approaches.

Institutionalized forms of prevention are most effective and should be favored instead of short-term projects.

It is important to develop local level action and structures as well as national and international work.

# Multi-method approach of community-level prevention of alcohol-related harms

Systematic multi-method approaches are more effective than separate policies.

Co-ordinated community-level prevention offers several possibilities for simultaneous action

- Local policies

- Social availability of alcohol

- Schools and youth activities

- Families

- Individuals

# Community coalitions

Working with wide networks of community actors

- Social and health professionals
- Police
- Schools
- Media
- Liquor license authorities
- Restaurant and shop personnel
- Local politicians
- Parents and other citizens

# Families

- Quality in child-parent relationship is important
- Parents should be given correct information on child development and on alcohol and drugs
- Developing parents' skills in conflict-solution and communication with the children
- Parents should be encouraged to talk clearly about their opinions and to create a family policy on children's alcohol use and home-coming times
- Parents and children can be taught to resist social pressure
- Treatment and help in parents' own alcohol problems

# Families

Even if the existing knowledge of what is effective is not very clear, several potentially good approaches have been developed

Some approaches can be harmful e.g. collecting high-risk youngsters into groups or telling young children about the qualities of different drugs

# Schools

- Schools' best possibilities are in offering a good environment for children
- Among small children, preventing behavioral problems seems to have an effect in later alcohol and drug use
- During teen-age years, a well-led school with clear rules and supporting environment can reduce problems
- Connections between alcohol habits in teen-age and during adulthood are weak.
- Education alone does not seem to have lasting effects on young peoples' use of alcohol.

# Social availability of alcohol

## Enforcement of laws and regulations

- serving or selling to the under-aged
- serving or selling to drunken persons
- enforcement of laws and norms regulating promotion of alcoholic drinks
- enforcing public order and safety

## Server-training

## Attitudes and norms of serving alcohol in private settings

# Local policies

## Local decision making on

- limitations of alcohol promotion
- number and locations of outlets
- times of opening
- public events
- resources and attention given to preventive work in different settings

## Forming local coalitions between different actors

# Local media

When combined with other forms of local prevention, can be an important way of influencing the politicians, local activists and the citizens thinking.

# Workplaces

- Workplaces should have an alcohol policy and a system of referral to treatment
- Workplace leadership and occupational health
- Screening and mini-intervention

# Social and health services and early intervention

Mini-intervention and screening can have a positive effect.

Difficulties in making mini-intervention a method of routine health care. There is a need to find a realistic and acceptable way of implementing.

# Measuring effectiveness of a community-based prevention project: Finnish example

## PAKKA

Two main goals: 1) to decrease heavy drinking occasions and related acute problems and 2) to decrease underaged drinking

# PAKKA

Examples of action:

- community coalitions (social and health professionals, restaurants and shops, police, policy-makers, parents and young people)
- server training
- enforcement and surveillance
- community mobilization and media-advocacy
- local alcohol policy decision making and organization

# Project evaluation

The objective is

- 1) to determine, whether the interventions have achieved their goal
- 2) how it was done

The design is quasi-experimental.

Pre- and post intervention data is collected in the two intervention communities and in the two matched comparison communities.

# Components of the evaluation data

## Process documentation

Process data: dates, activities, dosage, organization

## Intermediate outcomes:

1. Perception, attitudes and opinions
2. Decreased service of alcohol to intoxicated persons and decreased sales of alcohol to minors

## Final outcomes

1. Decreased drinking among young persons
2. Increased abstinence among the underaged
3. Reduction of alcohol-related harms typical to young people

# Evaluation of community-based prevention is a joint venture

- Scientific need-assessment and documentation of problems are a resource for the community organizers. The organizers help in accessing data and in disseminating it.
- Continuous process of feedback between the researchers and the community organizers is for their mutual benefit.
- Requires common goals and following the agreed principles required by the research setting, but also flexibility and compromising.