Alcohol Health Alliance: Alcohol behaviour & attitudes survey 2014

In 2014 the AHA commissioned a survey of UK residents to obtain information on alcohol behaviour, attitudes and perceptions. Data was collected between 23 October and 9 November 2014. Using online methodology, with a sample of 3077, data was weighted by age, gender, socio-economic classification and is representative of the UK population as a whole.

This briefing paper provides the headline statistics of the survey and is for internal use by AHA members for advocacy purposes. Further breakdown of data by age, gender, socio-economic classification and country is available upon request. This data should not be used for media releases unless express permission is granted by the AHA.

Alcohol consumption

Frequency of alcohol consumption
- Never 9%
- Monthly or less 17%
- 2 to 4 times a month 24%
- 2 to 3 times a week 29%
- 4 to 5 times a week 13%
- 6 or more times a week 8%

Exceeding 6/8 units on a single occasion
- Never 29%
- Less than monthly 36%
- Monthly 18%
- Weekly 14%
- Daily or almost daily 2%

Drinking profile
- 49% increasing/higher risk drinkers
- 42% low-risk drinkers
- 9% non-drinkers
Availability and licensing

- Over a third of respondents (35%) felt that there are too many places that sell alcohol in the UK. However, 60% felt that the number of places selling alcohol is about right, and only 2% felt that there are not enough places that sell alcohol.
- 52% of respondents agreed that the more widely alcohol is available to buy, the more alcohol people drink.
- 73% of respondents supported taking ‘the quality of life for local residents’ into account when deciding on licensing.
- Over two thirds of respondents (67%) agreed that the drink-related behaviour of others put them off going on a night out in their local town or city centre.
- Over two thirds of respondents (69%) said that they did not know where to go to comment on a licensing application.

Alcohol advertising

- 32% of respondents felt that there is currently too much advertising for alcoholic drinks, although 56% felt the current level is about right.
- However, 60% of respondents recognised that alcohol advertising increases the amount which people drink to some extent.
- 69% of respondents agreed that campaigns advertising alcohol products appeal to under 18s.
- 68% agreed that alcohol companies sponsoring sporting events sent the message to children that drinking alcohol is a normal part of enjoying these activities.
- 73% supported a ban on TV alcohol advertising before the 9pm watershed.
- 84% agreed that alcohol advertising should only be shown in a cinema if a film has an 18 certificate.
- When provided with more information about the impact of advertising on children, support for the different policy suggestions marginally increased.

Minimum unit pricing

- 55% had heard of minimum unit pricing although in Scotland the figure was significantly higher (72%).
- 68% of respondents agreed that the cheaper alcohol is, the more people drink. Over a quarter of respondents (26%) believed that alcohol is currently too cheap in supermarkets although 46% believe it to be ‘about right’.
- 53% of respondents were in favour of minimum unit pricing. When respondents were shown policy statements on the impact of MUP on alcohol related harm, this level of support increased to 61%.
- 24% of respondents were against minimum unit pricing, although this dropped to 20% after being shown the policy statements
- 82% of respondents thought that they would drink about the same amount if minimum unit pricing were to be introduced

Taxation of alcohol
- 77% of respondents believe that levels of alcohol taxation should be increased (20%) or should remain the same (57%)
- 23% believed that levels of alcohol taxation should be reduced
- After further information about the costs of alcohol to the UK economy, levels of support for an increase in tax rose to 28%

Alcohol and health
- 91% of respondents associated drinking alcohol with an increased risk of liver disease
- 74% associated alcohol with increased risk coronary heart disease
- 71% of respondents associated alcohol with increased risk of depression
- 46% of respondents associated alcohol with increased risk of cancer.
- 91% agreed that it is important that people know about how alcohol can affect health

Alcohol and cancer
- 31% associated alcohol consumption with increased risk of breast cancer
- 55% associated alcohol consumption with increased risk of bowel cancer
- 50% associated alcohol consumption with increased risk of mouth/throat cancer
- 84% associated alcohol consumption with increased risk of liver cancer

Alcohol labelling
- 87% of respondents support alcoholic product labels including a warning that, when pregnant, the safest option is to avoid alcohol completely
- 75% of people support alcoholic product labels including information on the drink’s nutritional value and calorie content
- 83% of people support alcoholic product labels including information on how alcohol can affect health