

# ALCOHOL

NO ORDINARY COMMODITY  
research and public policy

**SECOND EDITION**



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# What was before ANOC2?

- **Bruun, Kjetil & Edwards, Griffith & Lumio, Martti & Mäkelä, Klaus & Pan, Lynn & Popham, Robert E. & Room, Robin & Schmidt, Wolfgang & Skog, Ole-Jørgen & Sulkunen, Pekka & Österberg, Esa: Alcohol control policies in public health perspective. A Collaborative Project of the Finnish Foundation for Alcohol Studies, the World Health Organization Regional Office for Europe and the Addiction Research Foundation of Ontario. The Finnish Foundation for Alcohol Studies Vol. 25, Forssa 1975.**
- **Edwards, Griffith & Anderson, Peter & Babor, Thomas F. & Casswell, Sally & Ferrence, Roberta & Giesbrecht, Norman & Godfrey, Christine & Holder, Harold D. & Lemmens, Paul & Mäkelä, Klaus & Midanik, Lorraine T. & Norström, Thor & Österberg, Esa & Romelsjö, Anders & Room, Robin & Simpura, Jussi & Skog, Ole-Jørgen: Alcohol policy and the public good. Oxford University Press, 1994.**

# **And of course the original: Alcohol: No Ordinary Commodity**

- **Babor, Thomas. & Caetano, Raul & Casswell, Sally & Edwards, Griffith & Giesbrecht, Norman & Graham, Kathryn & Grube, Joel & Gruenewald, Paul & Hill, Linda & Holder, Harold & Homel, Ross & Österberg, Esa & Rehm, Jürgen & Room, Robin & Rossow, Ingeborg: Alcohol: No Ordinary Commodity. Oxford University Press: Oxford 2003.**

# What's in ANOC2?

1. Setting the policy agenda
2. Alcohol: no ordinary commodity
3. Alcohol consumption trends and pattern of drinking
4. The global burden of alcohol consumption
5. Global structure and strategies of alcohol industry
6. International context of alcohol policy
7. Strategies and interventions to reduce alcohol-related harm
8. Controlling affordability: pricing and taxation

# What's in ANOC2? (cont.)

9. Regulating physical availability
10. Modifying the drinking context: licensed drinking environment and other contexts
11. Drinking driving prevention and countermeasures
12. Restricting on marketing
13. Education and persuasion strategies
14. Treatment and early intervention strategies
15. The policy arena
16. Alcohol policies: a consumer's guide

# What's new in ANOC2?

- At least one third of the book is rewritten
- New developments in epidemiological research, including alcohol's role in the global burden of disease
- A new chapter on the global structure and strategies of the alcohol industry
- Revised ratings of 42 policy-related strategies and interventions based on continued growth of the knowledge base
- New understandings of the policymaking process at the local, national and international levels, especially with respect to the role of the alcoholic beverage industry in research and policy

# Strategies and Interventions Reviewed and Evaluated

- Pricing and Taxation
- Regulating Physical Availability
- Altering the Drinking Context
- Education and Persuasion
- Regulating Alcohol Promotion
- Drinking-Driving Countermeasures
- Treatment and Early Intervention

# Ratings of 42 Policy-relevant Prevention Strategies and Interventions

- 1) Evidence of Effectiveness – the quality of scientific information
- 2) Breadth of Research Support – quantity and consistency of the evidence
- 3) Tested Across Cultures, e.,g. countries, regions, subgroups

<sup>a</sup>Rating Scale: 0, +, ++, +++, (?)

# Assumptions Underlying Alcohol Taxation and Other Price Controls

## Policy

High taxes, prices

## Assumption

Reduce demand by  
increasing economic  
cost of alcohol  
relative to alternative  
commodities

# Pricing and Taxation

<b>Strategy or Intervention</b>	<b>Effective-ness</b>	<b>Research Support</b>	<b>Cross-National Testing</b>
<b>Alcohol Taxes</b>	+++	+++	+++
<b>Minimum price</b>	?	+	<b>O</b>
<b>Bans on price discounts and promotions</b>	?	+	<b>O</b>
<b>Differential price by beverage</b>	+	+	+
<b>Special or additional taxation on alcopops and youth-oriented beverages</b>	+	+	+

# Summary: Pricing and Taxation

Evidence suggests that:

- People increase their drinking when prices are lowered, and decrease their consumption when prices rise.
- Adolescents and problem drinkers are no exception to this rule.
- Increased alcoholic taxes and prices are related to reductions in alcohol-related problems, including crime, traffic accidents and mortality rates
- Alcohol taxes are an attractive instrument of alcohol policy because they can be used both to generate direct revenue and to reduce alcohol-related harm.
- The most important downside to raising alcohol taxes is smuggling and illegal in-country alcohol production.

# Assumptions Underlying Restrictions on Alcohol Availability

## Policy

Restrictions on  
time, place, and  
density of alcohol  
outlets

## Assumption

Reduce demand by  
restricting physical  
availability to obtain  
alcohol. Reduce total  
volume consumed as  
well as alcohol-related  
problems

# Regulating Physical Availability

<b>Strategy or Intervention</b>	<b>Effectiveness</b>	<b>Research Support</b>	<b>Cross-National Testing</b>
Ban on sales	+++	+++	++
Bans on drinking in public places	?	+	+
Minimum legal purchase age	+++	+++	++
Rationing	++	++	++
Government monopoly of retail sales	++	+++	++
Hours and days of sale restrictions	++	++	+++
Restrictions on density of outlets	++	+++	++
Different availability by alcohol strength	++	++	+

# **Summary: Regulating Alcohol Availability**

- **Restrictions on availability can have large effects in nations or communities where there is popular support for these measures.**
- **For young people, laws that raise the minimum legal drinking age reduce alcohol sales and problems.**
- **The cost of restricting alcohol availability is cheap relative to the costs of health consequences related to drinking, especially heavy drinking.**
- **Adverse effects include increases in informal market activities (e.g., cross-border purchases, home production, illegal imports)**

# Modifying the Drinking Context

Many prevention measures seek to re-define the contexts or change the environments where alcohol is typically sold and consumed (e.g., bars and restaurants), under the assumption that such changes can reduce alcohol-related aggression and intoxication.

Options include training bar staff, imposing voluntary house policies to refuse service, enforcement of regulations, community mobilization to influence problem establishments

# Modifying the Drinking Context

<b>Strategy or Intervention</b>	<b>Effective-ness</b>	<b>Research Support</b>	<b>Cross-National Testing</b>
<b>Staff training and house policies relating to responsible beverage service (RBS)</b>	O/+	+++	++
<b>Staff and management training to better manage aggression</b>	++	+	++
<b>Enhanced enforcement of on-premises laws and legal requirements</b>	++	++	++
<b>Server liability</b>	++	++	+
<b>Voluntary codes of bar practice</b>	O	+	+
<b>Late-night lockouts of licensed premises</b>	?	+	O

# Conclusions: Drinking Context

- Training programs for bar staff can have modest effects on patrons' intoxication level and aggression.
- Sustained impact may depend on enforcement.
- Approaches targeting high risk environments (training, enforcement, environmental design) are easier to implement than other intervention strategies.

# Assumptions Underlying Drink-driving Policy Options

## Policy

**Drink-driving  
countermeasures**

## Assumption

**Reduce drink driving  
through deterrence,  
punishment and  
social pressure**

# Drinking-Driving Countermeasures

<b>Strategy or Intervention</b>	<b>Effective-ness</b>	<b>Research Support</b>	<b>Cross-National Testing</b>
<b>Sobriety check points</b>	++	+++	+++
<b>Random breath testing</b>	+++	++	++
<b>Lowered BAC Limits</b>	+++	+++	+++
<b>Administrative license suspension</b>	++	++	++
<b>Low BAC for young drivers (“zero tolerance”)</b>	+++	++	++
<b>Graduated licensing for novice drivers</b>	++	++	++
<b>Designated drivers and ride services</b>	O	+	+
<b>Severity of punishment</b>	O/+	++	++

# **Summary: Drinking-Driving Countermeasures**

- **Consistently produce long-term problem reductions of between 5% and 30%.**
- **Deterrence-based approaches, using innovations such as Random Breath Testing, yield few arrests but substantial accident reductions.**
- **Another effective measure is the use of graduated licensing for novice drivers, which limits the conditions of driving during the first few years of licensing.**

# Regulating alcohol promotion

- The marketing of alcohol is a global industry.
- Alcohol brands are advertised through television, radio, print, point-of-sale promotions, and the Internet.
- Exposure to repeated high-level alcohol promotion inculcates pro-drinking attitudes and increases the likelihood of heavier drinking.
- Alcohol advertising predisposes minors to drinking well before legal age of purchase.
- Advertising has been found to promote and reinforce perceptions of drinking as positive, glamorous, and relatively risk-free.

# Assumption Underlying Regulation of Alcohol Marketing

## Policy

Regulating alcohol advertising and other marketing

## Assumption

Reducing exposure to marketing that normalizes drinking and links it with social aspirations will slow recruitment of young drinkers and reduce heavier drinking

Social modeling of excessive drinking contributes to underage drinking problems

# Restrictions on Marketing

<b>Strategy or Intervention</b>	<b>Effective-ness</b>	<b>Research Support</b>	<b>Cross-National Testing</b>
<b>Legal restrictions on exposure</b>	<b>+ / ++</b>	<b>+++</b>	<b>++</b>
<b>Legal restrictions on content</b>	<b>?</b>	<b>O</b>	<b>O</b>
<b>Alcohol industry's voluntary self-regulation codes</b>	<b>O</b>	<b>++</b>	<b>++</b>

# Assumptions Underlying Education and Persuasion Policy Options

## Policy

Provide information to adults and young people especially through mass media and school-based alcohol education programs

## Assumption

Health information increases knowledge, changes attitudes and prevents drinking problems

# Education and Persuasion

<b>Strategy or Intervention</b>	<b>Effectiveness</b>	<b>Research Support</b>	<b>Cross-National Testing</b>
Classroom education	O	+++	++
College student normative education	+	+	O
Brief intervention with high-risk students	+	+	<b>O</b>
<b>Mass media campaigns, including drink-driving campaigns</b>	O	+++	++
<b>Warning labels and signs</b>	O	+	O
<b>Social marketing</b>	O	++	O

# Summary: Education Strategies

- The impact of education and persuasion programs tends to be small at best.
- When positive effects are found, they do not persist.
- Among the hundreds of studies, only a few show lasting effects (after 3 years) (Foxcroft et al. 2003)
- Even comprehensive programs may not be sufficient to delay initiation of drinking or sustain small reductions after program
- Programs with multiple interactive components that resemble family therapy and brief intervention seem to have some potential
- Many programs show to be ineffective continue to be used

# Assumptions Underlying Treatment and Early Intervention

## Policy

Increase availability of treatment programs

Conduct screening and brief intervention in health care settings

## Assumption

Problem drinking is responsive to various therapeutic interventions

Heavy drinkers can be motivated to drink moderately before they acquire alcohol dependence

# Treatment and Early Intervention

<b>Strategy or Intervention</b>	<b>Effectiveness</b>	<b>Research Support</b>	<b>Cross-national Testing</b>
<b>Brief intervention with at-risk drinkers</b>	+++	+++	+++
<b>Mutual help/self-help attendance</b>	++	++	++
<b>Mandatory treatment of drink-driving repeat offenders</b>	+	++	○
<b>Medical and social detoxification</b>	+++	++	++
<b>Talk therapies</b>	++	+++	++
<b>Pharmaceutical therapies</b>	+	++	++

# Best Practices

- **Minimum legal purchase age**
- **Government monopoly**
- **Restriction on hours or days of sale, outlet density**
- **Alcohol taxes**
- **Lower alcohol strength**
- **Random Breath Testing**
- **Lowered BAC limits**
- **Administrative license suspension**
- **Graduated licensing for novice drivers**
- **Brief interventions for hazardous drinkers**
- **Treatment and detox**

# Conclusions

- **Opportunities for effective, evidence-based alcohol policies are more available than ever to better serve the public good.**
- **Alcohol policies that limit access to alcoholic beverages, discourage driving under the influence of alcohol, reduce the legal purchasing age for alcoholic beverages, and increase the price of alcohol, are likely to reduce the harm linked to underage drinking**
- **Alcohol problems can be minimized or prevented using a coordinated, systematic policy response.**