



Why adults drink at home?

Dr John Foster et al
November 2009



Home Drinking

- British Beer and Pub and Association: (figures end of 2007)- % Off-sales
- 84% wine
- 77% spirits
- 44% beer

Is this the real problem?



Home Drinking Adults at Risk

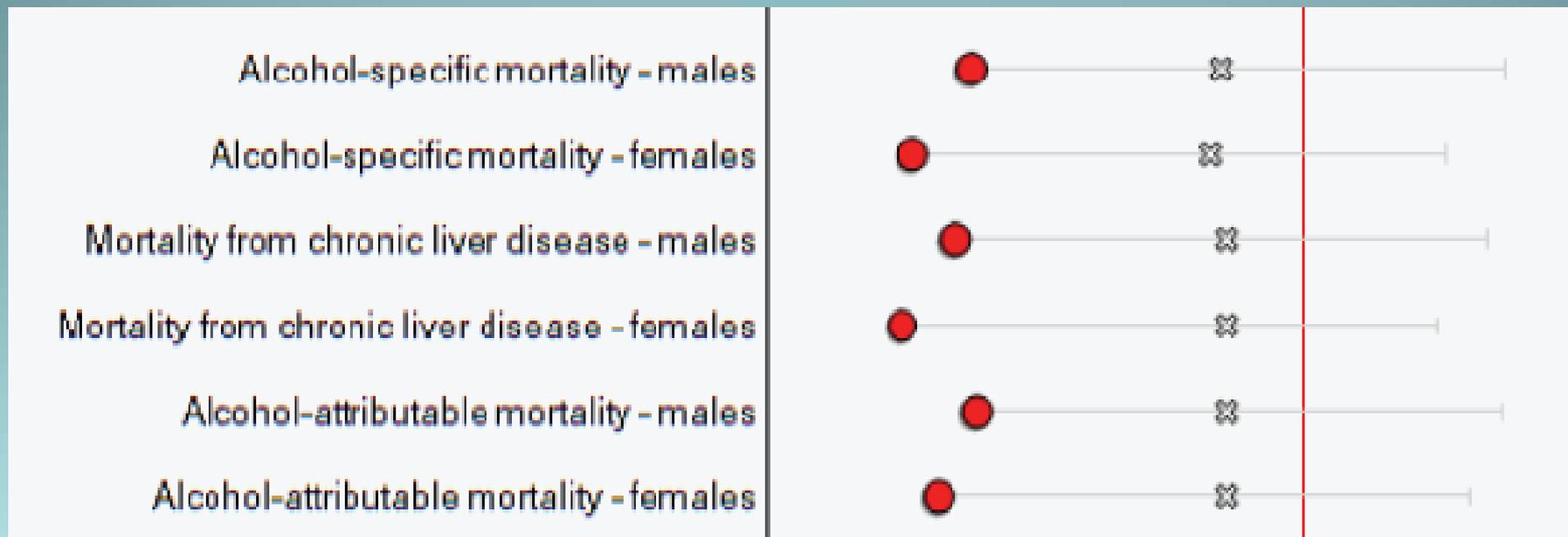
- Women aged 45-64
- The Elderly
- Carers of the Elderly
- Affluent adults. Despite the way the binge drinking debate is portrayed. Affluent areas are associated with greater likelihood of hazardous drinking. Greater use of supermarkets and greater wine consumption.

Partnership

- Middlesex University (Principal Applicant now at Greenwich University)
- Blackpool PCT
- Ethical Approval granted by Middlesex University- Ethics Health Sub-Committee after this was agreed by Blackpool PCT
- Full report available from end of Nov 09 on www.aerc.org.uk



Alcohol and health in Blackpool



England Best

Source: NWPHO www.nwpho.net/alcohol/lape

Study Design

- Qualitative study – focus group interviews.
- 38 participants recruited via key contacts in the community
- 4 focus groups:
 - Younger people (n=15, aged 13-21; 9 males, 6 females)
 - Residents association (n=15, aged 25-70; 6 males, 9 females)
 - Group of volunteers (n=4, aged 30-50; 1 male, 3 females)
 - LGBT group (n=4, aged 20-30; 1 male, 3 females)

Influences on drinking in the home....

- Price and availability
- Convenience
- Safety and risk
- Freedom from scrutiny
- Stress /Reward
- Self imposed rules
- Family, Childcare and friends
- Smoking ban
- Good or Bad?
- Normalisation



Price and Availability 1



- “I have found this week that I have brought more alcohol than I have ever brought in my life because it was cheap. It was a heck of a lot of more than I would normally buy. It was two litre bottles for £20 last week and this week it is 7 pound a bottle. I ended up buying double or triple I would normally buy because I'm saving some money on it.”

Price and Availability (2)

- When you are out with your mates if there are 10 or 15 of you, if you all put in a tenner that's £150 between 15 of you to spend on booze so when you're out and everyone buys booze just with that £10. Say like...how much is a bottle of vodka now, about £10 or something?



Convenience

- “You can relax more at home. You don't have to wait at the bar to be served; you can just go and get yourself a drink. You sit down and you are pretty much there for the rest of the night.”



Safety and Risk

- I feel quite scared drinking on the street because every Friday night I go out there is a fight and even if I am not involved in it it's either one of my friends or I see it or it is near me. [Young Woman]



Freedom from Scrutiny

- no one can question you on how much you are drinking.... In a licensed place you have to behave a certain way and drink a certain way (Female)
- You can do what you want, mix your drinks and you don't have to justify your actions to anyone. (Male)



Stress/Rewards

- “I think if you have had a particularly stressful day at work. I will get in the bath and open a bottle of wine”
- Young woman with children



Self-Imposed Rules: (1)

- **Not drinking in front of children/Not drinking before a certain time.**
- “When I have a drink, I have a nine-year-old son and we don't make a habit of having a drink when he is up. So we will make sure, if he goes to bed at nine o'clock, then we will have a drink.” (Male)
- **Drinking with food.**
- “ I don't drink every night but I like to have a drink with food. Whereas when I go out I feel like I have to drink.”

Self- Imposed Rules (2)

- **Avoidance of drinking alone- associated with loneliness, depression and destructive drinking.**
- “I have a friend who is notorious for getting 3 bottles of wine for a tenner and drinking them. I will be out on a night out and get endless texts about “my life is rubbish I want to kill myself and all that stuff. We always talk about it because she wakes up and says it was just the drink and drivel. So I suppose that it is a down side especially if you are on your own and feeling down and you have been drinking on your own and you are left with your own thoughts.”

Family and Social Occasions

- “I would say birthdays, anniversaries or anything like that. Anything to do with my family where we are all together we always end up having a couple of bottles of wine, special occasions.”



sea088 www.fotosearch.com

I think there is a lot more home drinking since the smoking ban. A lot more people now don't go out

I have quite a few friends who do smoke and you end up spending half the night outside with your friends

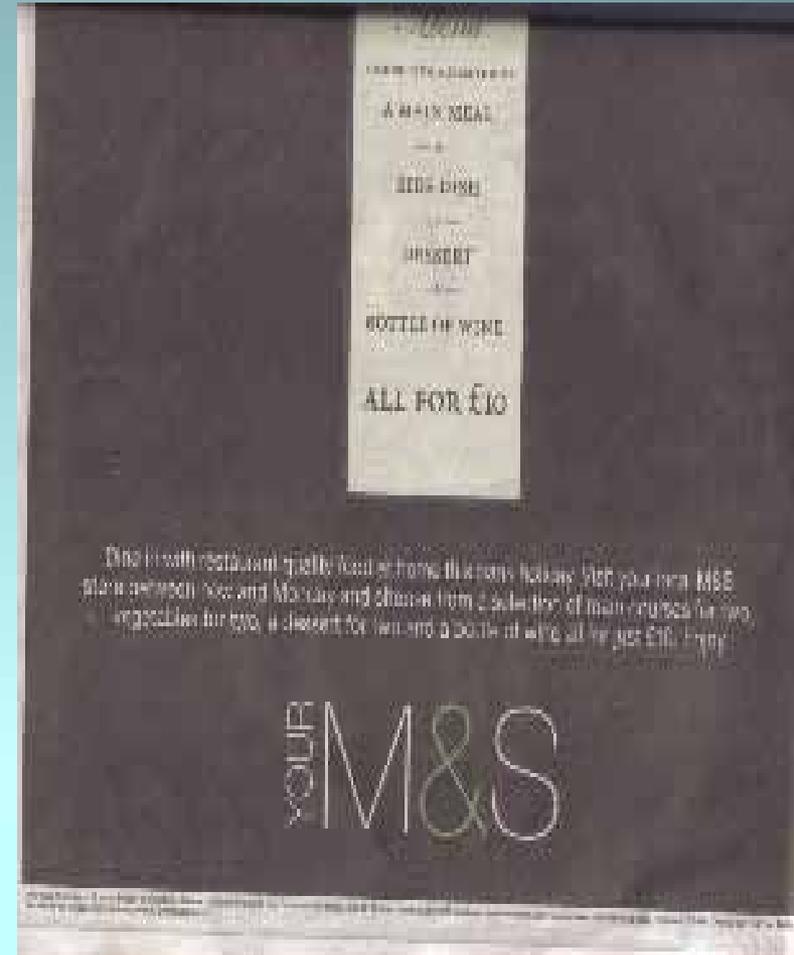
Smoke free venues...

Home Drinking: Good or Bad?

- “ It’s not just the type of drink, a certain amount of friends that you have got, you have got your two sets of friends. You’ve got your friends that come round and you can have a quiet drink with, watch TV, play games whatever. You also got your friends that come around and get rowdy, you’ve got police coming to your door because you have music going on, and it spills out onto the street, and somebody is getting hurt because we are all drunk and decided to have a fight with someone else.”
- Interaction between drug, psychological make up of the user and setting drug taken explains a drug effect

Normalisation.

- “ I don't think people are aware of what they are drinking. I think they take it as natural, just another day comes. I don't think if you ask an ordinary person they would say they drink all the time.”



Limitations of Study

- Not a randomly selected sample
- No measurement means generalisability cannot be inferred. Need to conduct a robust survey
- Blackpool may not be representative of other parts of the country
- The following were not included- more affluent men and women, young people/students with disposable income/ elderly or carers.
- However in reality a comprehensive and diverse qualitative dataset

Some Thoughts (1)

- The reasons for drinking at home can be collapsed under the heading of “**Convenience:**”-
- **Cost:** From 1980-2003 the real price of alcohol fell by 54% (**Office for National Statistics 2004**)
- University of Sheffield study funded by Department of Health suggest a minimum price of 50p per unit of alcohol. (**Meier et al 2009**)- Subsequently recommended by BMA and Chief Medical Officer (Liam Donaldson)
- “We don’t want the responsible sensible majority to pay more as a result of the excesses of the minority”- Gordon Brown in response to Liam Donaldson

Some Thoughts (2)

- **Safety:-** Night-time economy an economic imperative for many UK towns and cities.
- Residents of Blackpool had a perception of more alcohol-related problems caused by this than most of the NW of England (**Cook et al 2008**)
- Number of Licensing Officers/Chairs of Licensing Committees were concerned to attract young families back into their areas especially in the early evenings. (**Herring et al 2008**)
- **Parents as Positive Role Models:** Evidence from UK that young people 15-16 given in alcohol by parents drink less and incur less alcohol related risk (**Bellis et al 2009**)

Some Thoughts (3)

- There are some cultures where the goal of abstinence for 15-16 years old is realistic. But good evidence (**Bellis et al 2009**) (n=9,833 students 15-16) this is likely to lead to more risky unsupervised drinking in UK
- “Getting adults to go to a shop and buy it” was associated with greater risk-taking behaviour
- Cheaper drinks in terms of strength(ciders and spirits) also associated with high risk behaviour.
- Wine consumption usually given by parents associated with less risk-taking behaviours

Some thoughts (4)

- **Stress/Reward:** Over time alcohol is associated with increased stress and higher likelihood of dependency.
- The belief that it relieves stress and is a reward is based on expectancy and is a learnt behaviour.
- It can lead to increased drinking which in the home has minimal external controls.
- It is likely to be linked to increase affluence and though sensitive should be a target for public health intervention

Some Thoughts (5)

- **Normalisation:** The feeling that home drinking has become “normal” is of concern and likely to lead to greater drinking because unlike licensed premises there are no external controls.
- The way the debate around the problems of binge drinking focuses upon the “visible” problems presented by drinking (that demand a policy response)
- Invisible problems are in many ways more invidious. Alcohol related mortality and morbidity is on the increase.
- Largely the result of a time lag i.e drinking 20 years ago. Per capita consumption is now higher (far higher)

The Team:

- Thanks for listening
- Dr John Foster – now Greenwich University
- Dr Karunananthi Sakthidharan- Mersey Deanery (Blackpool PCT)
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- Project funded by Alcohol Education and Research Council.
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Drinking in the UK -2009 (1)

- Extremely difficult to get accurate per capita consumption figures –not least because methods of calculating wine consumption has changed- GHS.
- Customs and Excise Data – suggest 2007/2008 figures 11.53- litres per head- - levelling off but significantly more than 1995.
- Suggestion this is falling in the recession- (**British Beer and Pub Association 2009**)

Drinking in the UK 2009 (2)

- Number of Men drinking 8 units on at least one day prior to interview fell from 22-18% (1998-2006) for women those drinking more than 6 units figure was stable (**NHS Information 2009**)
- Numbers of young people aged 11-15 who are drinking is falling but those who were are consuming a mean of 12.7 units per week.
- Some evidence prevalence of alcohol dependency in men is falling since 2000- figures for women are stable.

Some Health –Related Data (2009)

- 2002/03- 2007/08 increase of 69% in alcohol-related hospital admissions (NB comparison?)
- 62% were men in 2007/08
- Older men and women formed the majority of alcohol-related hospital admissions
- Since 2001-2007 increase in alcohol-related deaths of 19%.
- 2007 figures (n=.6,541) – 65% alcoholic liver disease.

Home Drinking –Some data (1)

- Poorly Researched
- Not mentioned in first alcohol strategy document- health burden this creates recognised in second strategy document
- Growing faster than pubs , cafes or restaurants (**Drinks Business Review 2008**).
- The off trade worth £12.3 billion in 2008 likely to increase by 15% by 2010

Home drinking –some data (2)

- International research has shown for a number of years majority of drinking takes place outside of pubs (**Single and Wortley 1993**).
- Men most likely to purchase drink in bars
- Between 16-24 years of age 45% women purchase alcohol in bars- thereafter figure falls to 26%.

“Home” Drinking -some data (3)

- Drinking outside by underage drinkers associated with greater “at risk behaviours”- e.g violence, unsafe sex. (**Coleman and Cater 2005**)
- Under age drinkers have little difficulty in obtaining alcohol (**Maisey and Davies 2003**)
- Preloading- (drinking before going out) is becoming increasingly commonplace)- more prevalent in women and associated with greater at risk behaviours (**Hughes et al 2007**)