
Global Status Report: Alcohol Policy



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Foreword

I am pleased to present this timely publication on *Global Status Report: Alcohol Policy*. The report is a first attempt by WHO to provide a comprehensive overview highlighting the current state of alcohol policies world-wide.

This report is part of the continuous work coming out of the WHO Global Alcohol Database, the world's largest single source of information on alcohol which was initiated in 1996. Earlier reports from the database are the *Global Status Report on Alcohol* (1999) and the *Global Status Report on Alcohol and Young People* (2001). The report presents in a comprehensive way the current status of alcohol policies in much of the world and provides an objective first baseline on which to monitor and build relevant alcohol policies globally.

The growing recognition that alcohol consumption is a significant contributor to the global burden of disease means that alcohol requires greater attention by the public health community than it is receiving at present. Appropriate policy responses are needed to address the various health and social problems associated with use of and dependence on alcohol. This global report on alcohol policy will serve as a resource for Member States that are seeking ways to formulate and implement evidence-based and cost-effective measures to reduce the burden associated with alcohol consumption that are culturally and legally appropriate.

With growing awareness of alcohol consumption as one of the major risk factors to public health, countries and communities should search for policies that protect and promote health, prevent harm and address the many social problems associated with alcohol use. Ideally, scientific evidence should inform both policymaking and public debate. One of the issues to debate is the extent to which successful public health measures are transferable between different cultures, and the different situations in developed and developing countries.

I am grateful to the many professionals and officials in countries and WHO offices who contributed to this report. I am confident that the report will help countries to influence both levels of alcohol consumption and drinking patterns, and consequently reduce alcohol-related harm.



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This document was prepared under the direction of Maristela Monteiro, Coordinator of the Management of Substance Abuse team, and later under the direction of Vladimir Poznyak, both of whom also provided invaluable input. Nina Rehn is the principal author of this report. Excellent research assistance was received from Kelvin Chuan Heng Khoo and Andrea Zumbrunn. Gerhard Gmel, Swiss Institute for the Prevention of Alcohol and Drug Problems provided comments on the report as a whole. Thanks are also due to Isidore Obot of the Management of Substance Abuse unit for his contributions to data collection and comments on the report. Heidemarie Vaucher, Elisabeth Grisel, and Lucienne Boujon, Swiss Institute for the Prevention of Alcohol and Drug Problems, and Mylene Schreiber and Tess Narciso, Management of Substance Abuse, WHO, all provided much needed secretarial and editorial assistance.

This report has been produced within the framework of alcohol research and policy initiatives implemented by the Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse under the direction of Benedetto Saraceno.

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