“Ten things the alcohol industry won’t tell you about alcohol”

National Alcohol Series
2009

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- Scientific evidence

- www.alcoholaction.co.nz
Council Support

Christchurch City Council*  North Shore City Council*
Dunedin City Council  Palmerston North City Council*
Gisborne District Council  Queenstown-Lakes District Council*
Grey District Council  Rotorua District Council*
Hamilton City Council  Taupo District Council
Invercargill City Council*  Tauranga District Council*
Kaikoura District Council  Thames-Coromandel District Council*
Malborough District Council  Waitakere City Council*
Masterton District Council*  Wanganui District Council*
Manukau City Council*  Wellington City Council*
Napier City Council  Whakatane District Council*
Nelson City Council  Whangarei District Council
New Plymouth District Council*
General Support
(as at 6/10/09)

- Alcohol Advisory Council of New Zealand (ALAC)
- Budget Car and Truck Rental
- Cancer Society of New Zealand Inc
- Canterbury District Health Board (CDHB)
- Canterbury Hospitals’ Medical Staff Assn
- Community and Public Health Timaru
- Drug and Alcohol Support Taupo Trust
- Group Against Liquor Advertising (GALA)
- Hanmer Clinic Tauranga
- Keith Hay Trust
- Lane Neave Barristers & Solicitors
- Moana House
- National Addiction Centre (NAC)
- National Pacific Treatment Forum (NPTF)
- New Zealand Drug Foundation (NZDF)
- New Zealand Nurses Organisation (NZNO)
- Northland District Health Board (NDHB)
- Odyssey House Auckland
- Profile: Auckland AOD Treatment Providers Network
- Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists (RANZCP)
- Totara Terrace Pure Grape Juice
- University of Otago
Alcoholism: A National Emergency
by William C. Menninger, M.D.

As I SAID some time ago in my article on "Tensions in Family Life" which was published in the April, 1953 issue of PASTORAL PSYCHOLOGY, "If something is really going to be done about mental health, it will not be done by professional psychiatrists, but by citizens across the board—the parents, teachers, and clergy, and the leaders in other professions and in industry." This statement holds equally true for the problems of alcoholism.

A great many troubled people come to the minister for help and a large proportion of these are alcoholics. Sometimes it is a wife who wants to consult the minister about a husband, and sometimes it is the other way around, but always it is a challenging and difficult problem requiring of the minister the utmost in dedication, delicacy, skill, and knowledge. For this reason we welcome this second issue of PASTORAL PSYCHOLOGY on the minister and the alcoholic, for it should help to provide the dedicated minister with some of the understanding and the skills which this difficult and delicate task demand.

Now, what are some of the present facts about alcoholism?

In our country alone there are over 4,500,000 problem drinkers—an astounding figure which represents more than 2 per cent of our population. Even that does not state the total size of the problem. We do not know the extent of alcoholism's role in the enormous and increasing numbers of accidents and crimes, nor the effect on the families and friends of this huge group of people.

Studies by a number of companies show why alcoholism can truthfully be called the "billion dollar hangover" in industry. For instance, the problem drinker:

loses, from the effects of alcohol, 
22 working days a year more than 
the average employee; 
loses, from other illnesses, another
“If alcohol was a communicable disease, a national emergency would be declared”

William C Menninger
(1957)
Deaths this year from H1N1 flu $<20$

Deaths this year from alcohol $>1000$
Stellar Trust Chairman
Alistair Burry
Methamphetamine “P” Epidemic

“All the family violence that you see, all those poor babies and young kids that are being bashed. How long is this country going to allow this kind of thing to continue?”

“It's an issue that has been under the carpet and maybe it's time that it was brought out into the open.”

Herald on Sunday (21/3/09)
Yearly deaths from “P” < 20

Yearly deaths from alcohol > 1000

“If alcohol was a new drug, a national crisis would be declared”
The New Zealand Way of Life

- 25% of New Zealand drinkers are heavy drinkers
- A third of all police apprehensions involve alcohol
- Half of serious violent crimes relate to alcohol
- 60 different medical conditions caused by heavy drinking
- Up to 75% of adult presentations at Emergency Departments on Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights are alcohol-related
- Over 300 alcohol-related offences every day
- Over 500 serious and fatal injury traffic crashes every year
- At least 600 children born each year with fetal alcohol spectrum disorder
- Over 1000 alcohol deaths every year
- More than 17,000 years of life per year lost through alcohol
ALCOHOL IN OUR LIVES

AN ISSUES PAPER ON THE REFORM OF NEW ZEALAND’S LIQUOR LAWS
Key Message

There is a national alcohol crisis: NZ’s heavy drinking culture

If we want a safer and healthier society, we need to find new middle ground between:

Excessive commercialisation of alcohol and

Prohibition of alcohol
Consumerism

• Consumerism is as old as civilisation itself

  People purchasing and consuming in excess of their basic needs

• So what is the issue here?
  (i) Alcohol is no ordinary commodity
  (ii) The presence of business corporations
Corporation:

“An ingenious device for obtaining profit without individual responsibility”

Ambrose Bierce (1842 – 1914)
American writer and critic
Four pillars maintaining the national alcohol crisis

1. An immensely powerful, swimmingly wealthy, global alcohol industry

2. A set of quiet, passive, comfortable middle-class shareholders

3. Political pragmatism of governments

4. The idea that it is individual drinkers who are causing the problem
Six medical things the alcohol industry won’t tell you about alcohol

1. Alcohol is a highly intoxicating drug with a relatively low safety index
2. Alcohol is a neurotoxin which can cause brain damage
3. Alcohol can directly cause aggression
4. Alcohol is fattening in moderate drinkers
5. Alcohol can cause cancer
6. Alcohol cardio-protection has been talked up
Three more things the alcohol industry definitely won’t tell you about alcohol

7. The alcohol industry actively markets alcohol to young people
8. Low risk drinking means drinking low amounts of alcohol
9. A lot of the alcohol industry’s profit comes from heavy drinking
A final thing the alcohol industry will do their best to stop you knowing about

10. The “5+ Solution”

To the national alcohol crisis:
New Zealand’s heavy drinking culture
1. Alcohol is a highly intoxicating drug with a relatively low safety index.
Alcohol is a drug

• Proper name is ethanol, which is short-hand for ethyl alcohol
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Drug</th>
<th>Safety Ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Heroin</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GHB</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethanol</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methamphetamine</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cocaine</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MDMA (Ecstasy)</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methadone</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Codeine</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psilocybin</td>
<td>1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LSD</td>
<td>1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cannabis</td>
<td>&gt;1000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Relative intoxication effects
(Hilts 1994 quoted by Room 2009)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Drug</th>
<th>Intoxication Effect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ethanol</td>
<td>1st</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heroin</td>
<td>2nd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cocaine</td>
<td>3rd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cannabis</td>
<td>4th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicotine</td>
<td>5th</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Expert Advisory Committee on Drugs’ criteria applied to alcohol
(Sellman, Robinson, Beasley 2009)

Class A: (Very High Risk)
heroin, cocaine, methamphetamine

Class B: (High Risk)
morphine, ecstasy, d-amphetamine, GHB, (ethanol)

Class C: (Moderate Risk)
cannabis, benzodiazepines, BZP
2. Alcohol is a neurotoxin which can cause brain damage
De Bellis et al 2000
What about social drinkers?

Heavy social drinkers can show signs of brain damage and cognitive dysfunction (Harper 2009)

However, brain changes have not been found in low social drinkers (de Bruin et al 2005)

Low social drinker = less than 12 sds per week
Prevalence of FASD

• 30-40% of women drink alcohol in pregnancy  
  (Ebrahim & Gfroerer 2003)

• Incidence of FASD is at least 1% of all births  
  (May & Gossage 2001)

• Over 60,000 children born each year in New Zealand therefore, could be at least 600 children born with FASD each year in New Zealand

• The lifetime costs of one child suffering FAS in the US has been estimated at $750,000  
  (Quoted by Easton 2003)
3. Alcohol can directly cause aggression
Alcohol can directly cause aggression

- Half of the murders, rapes and assaults are undertaken by the perpetrator under the influence of alcohol

- 70,000 physical and sexual assaults each year involve alcohol

(Connor et al 2009)
Electric Shock Game Experiment

• 136 men administering electric shocks to a fake competitor

• Two groups:
  (i) alcohol
  (ii) orange juice

• Alcohol makes men more sadistic
A very informative new study studying facial emotion  
(Attwood et al 2009)

- 96 participants were randomised to three standard drinks of alcohol or tonic water
- Shown a series of faces and asked what emotion was being expressed
Findings

• Men (but not women) misinterpreted disgust as anger

• First time, demonstrated that men under the influence of recreational drug levels of alcohol have a tendency to misinterpret negative emotion as anger
4. Alcohol is fattening in moderate drinkers
1gm CHO/Protein = 4 calories
1gm Ethanol = 7 calories
1gm Fat = 9 calories
More than 600 calories in a bottle of wine

~1/3 daily fuel requirement for an average person
5. Alcohol can cause cancer
WHO International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC)

Carcinogenicity classification

Group 1    Definitely carcinogenic
Group 2a   Probably carcinogenic
Group 2b   Possibly carcinogenic
Group 3    Unknown
Group 4    Probably not carcinogenic
Group 1 carcinogens (selected list of 10 commonly known)

- Asbestos
- Benzene
- Cyclophosphamide
- Ethanol
- Formaldehyde
- Hepatitis B and C viruses
- Mustard Gas
- Nickel compounds
- Plutonium-239
- X- and Gamma- radiation
Alcohol and relative risk of 7 cancers
(Corrao et al 2004)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>25g/day</th>
<th>50g/day</th>
<th>100g/day</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oral/pharynx</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Larynx</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oesophagus</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breast</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liver</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rectum</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colon</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What about prostate cancer?
Alcohol use and prostate cancer
(Fillmore et al 2009)

“There is a positive linear association between level of alcohol consumption and prostate cancer incidence”
6. Alcohol cardio-protection has been talked up

Sellman, Connor, Robinson, Jackson (2009)
Doctors have promoted alcohol a long time

“*Aqua vitae*” (water of immortality)

“*It prolongs life, clears away ill-humors, revives the heart, and maintains youth*”

Amaldus of Villanova,
Professor of Medicine (14th Century)
According to repeated nationwide surveys,

More Doctors Smoke CAMELS
than any other cigarette!

Doctors in every branch of medicine were asked, “What cigarette do you smoke?” The brand named most was Camel!

You’ll enjoy Camels for the same reason so many doctors enjoy them. Camels have cool, cool mildness, pack after pack, and a flavor unmatched by any other cigarette.

Make this sensible test: Smoke only Camels for 30 days and see how well Camels please your taste. How well they suit your throat as your steady smoke. You’ll see how enjoyable a cigarette can be!

THE DOCTORS’ CHOICE IS AMERICA’S CHOICE!

For 30 days, test Camels in your “T-Zone” (T for Throat, T for Taste).
Is alcohol cardioprotective?

- Probably not  Eichner (1985)
- Probably yes  Moore & Pearson (1986)
- Yes “proved”  Doll (2002)
- Possibly not  Corrao et al (2000)
- Yes, but…  Jackson et al (2005)
- Not likely  Chikritzhs et al (2009)
Is alcohol cardioprotective?

- Probably not
  - Eichner (1985)
- Probably yes
  - Moore & Pearson (1986)
  - Doll et al (1994)
  - Doll et al (1997)
  - Doll (2002)
- Yes “proved”
- Yes
- Possibly not
- Yes, but…
  - Jackson et al (2005)
- Not likely
  - Chikritzhs et al (2009)

* Received money from the alcohol industry
7. The alcohol industry actively markets alcohol to young people
The alcohol industry actively markets alcohol to young people

- Youth (15-24 years): a nearly perfect market for the alcohol industry
The alcohol industry actively markets alcohol to young people

- Every advertisement seen by a young person (15-24 years) increases the number of drinks they consume by 1%  (Snyder et al 2006)

- Customers for life (like the tobacco industry)
"If you are really and truly not going to sell to children, you are going to be out of business in 30 years."

Bennet Leslow, CEO Brook Group LTD
For the first time, an alcohol company insider admits the industry deliberately targets young people by sweetening ready-to-drink "alcopops" to mask the taste of alcohol.

The Age - August 6, 2007
8. Low risk drinking means drinking low amounts of alcohol
**What is low risk?**

**1:100 lifetime risk of death**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cause of death</th>
<th>50 years of behaviour</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Injury</td>
<td>62 km cycling every week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Injury</td>
<td>6189 km by jet plane every week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cancer, Heart disease</td>
<td>Smoking ~5 cigarettes a week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Injury, Chronic disease</td>
<td>Drinking ~2 sds per day</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Based on Wilson 1979)
Low-risk drinking guidelines
(NHMRC 2009)

- Lifetime mortality risk of 1:100
  - 2 sds per day
  - No more than 4 sds on any one occasion
  - Men and women the same

- 33% below current ALAC guideline for men
9. A lot of the alcohol industry’s profit comes from heavy drinking.
USA

• A landmark of over 200,000 people aged 12 years and over

• Teenage drinkers drink 20% of the alcohol and adult excessive drinkers 30%

(Foster et al 2003)
Australia

Percentage of alcohol consumed at low, risky and high risk levels for acute (e.g. injury) harm in Australia, 2001

National Drug Research Institute 2003
New Zealand

- Half of the total alcohol is consumed during heavy binge drinking episodes defined as:
  - 8 standard drinks for men or more
  - 6 standard drinks for women or more

(Habgood et al. 2001)
Key Message

There is a national alcohol crisis:
NZ’s heavy drinking culture:

If we want a safer and healthier society, we need to find new middle ground between:

Excessive commercialisation of alcohol and Prohibition of alcohol
Where we are now | Where we want to get to | Not here!

Excessive | Effective | Prohibition
Free Market | Regulation
10. The “5+ Solution”
alcohol: no ordinary commodity
research and public policy
Professor Sally Casswell
(1947 – present)
The 5+ Solution

1. Raise alcohol prices
2. Raise the purchase age
3. Reduce alcohol accessibility
4. Reduce marketing and advertising
5. Increase drink-driving counter-measures

PLUS: Increase treatment opportunities for heavy drinkers

Confirmed by Anderson et al (2009)
1. Raise alcohol prices
Relationship between price and how much alcohol is consumed

Academy of Medical Sciences, London, 2004
1. Raise alcohol prices

- Introduce a minimum price per unit of alcohol (to reduce harmful drinking)
- Increase the current level of excise tax on alcohol (to compensate for the harm)
2. Raise the purchase age
Minimum Purchasing Age for Alcohol and Traffic Crash Injuries Among 15- to 19-Year-Olds in New Zealand (Kypri et al 2005)

“Over the past 10 years since the drop in the purchase age in New Zealand from 20 years to 18 years there have been approximately 430 alcohol-related injury crashes involving 15-19 year-old drivers that would not have occurred had the age not been lowered”
Relative risk of fatal crash by blood alcohol level

![Graph showing the relative risk of fatal crashes by blood alcohol concentration (BAC) for different age groups.](image)
Planning ability in children and adolescents

(Romine & Reynolds 2005)
Frontal lobe maturation in humans occurs by what age?

a. 15 years
b. 17 years - some
c. 19 years - many
d. 21 years - most
e. 23 years
2. Raise the purchase age

Restore the minimum age for purchasing alcohol from any licensed premises to 20 years
3. Reduce alcohol accessibility (Outlets)

Return supermarkets and convenience stores to being alcohol-free
3. Reduce alcohol accessibility (Hours)

• Restrict the opening hours of all off-licenses on a nationwide basis from 10am to 10pm

• Restrict on-license premises from selling alcohol after 1am on a nationwide basis

• Provide for a standing extension to serve alcohol until 3am if the premises operates a one-way door policy whereby patrons can remain on the premises, but new patrons cannot enter the premises after 1am
4. Reduce marketing and advertising

Currently ~$200,000 a day

Normalising and maintaining the heavy drinking culture
Just phoned to say I love you.
PURSUE YOUR DAYDREAMS.
It’s Friday night
Time to light the fuse

Librarian by day
Bacardi by night
About half the marketing spend is on sponsorship.
STAND BY NEW ZEALAND’S FINEST.
For richer for poorer - for better for worse - in sickness and in health - 'till death do us part.

Steinlager

New Zealand All Blacks
“NZ’s soul” sold to Steinlager for another four years

"Steinlager is a hugely iconic New Zealand brand and has been a valued supporter of the All Blacks and of rugby for a very long time," said NZRU chief executive Steve Tew.
"We don't smoke that shit, We just reserve the right to sell it to the young, the poor, the black and the stupid."

RJ Reynolds Tobacco Executive
Title: Access to Confidential Alcohol Industry Documents: From ‘Big Tobacco’ to ‘Big Booze’

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Impact of Alcohol Advertising and Media Exposure on Adolescent Alcohol Use: A Systematic Review of Longitudinal Studies (Anderson et al 2009)

“Alcohol advertising and promotion increases the likelihood that adolescents will start to use alcohol, and to drink more if they are already using alcohol”
4. Reduce marketing and advertising

Introduce a New Zealand version of “Loi Evin”

- No alcohol promotion permitted through television, radio, cinema, billboard or internet advertising
- No alcohol promotion permitted through sponsorship of cultural or sporting events
- Limited advertising is permitted in printed media but must be limited to messages that provide information directly related to the product rather than selling values
- Marketing of alcohol at youth is explicitly prohibited
5. Increase drink-driving countermeasures

- Blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of 50mg/100ml (0.05) is a standard definition of intoxication
  
  (Teplin & Lutz 1985)

- New Zealand’s current BAC limit is 0.08, i.e., we permit people over the age of 20 to drive intoxicated
Relative risk of fatal crash by blood alcohol level
5. Increase drink-driving countermeasures

- Lower the BAC limit from 0.08 to 0.05 for those 20 years and over

- Lower the BAC limit to zero for those under 20 years
Countries with BAC limit of 0.05

Argentina
Australia
Austria
Belgium
Canada, Ontario
Denmark
Finland
France
Germany
Greece
Iceland

Italy
Luxembourg
Netherlands
Peru
Portugal
Serbia
South Africa
Spain
Switzerland
Thailand
Turkey
PLUS: Increase treatment opportunities for heavy drinkers

Seven suggestions by Sir Geoffrey and his team are all supported

BUT needing explaining is:
$800 million excise tax on alcohol collected
$70 million spent on alcohol treatment
The 5+ Solution

1. Raise alcohol prices
2. Raise the purchase age
3. Reduce alcohol accessibility
4. Reduce marketing and advertising
5. Increase drink-driving counter-measures

PLUS: Increase treatment opportunities for heavy drinkers

Confirmed by Anderson et al (2009)
WARNING

The alcohol industry is not your friend
WARNING
The alcohol industry is not your friend

Four key tactics used by the alcohol industry:

1. Portray alcohol as part of the ‘good life’ – associations with sex, fun, success, peer acceptance and independence

2. Link alcohol problems with an ‘irresponsible’ minority, losers who ‘can’t handle’ alcohol or have a genetic predisposition to experiencing problems with it

3. Be seen as part of the solution rather than part of the problem – advocate responsibility, personal choice and fulfilling lifestyles

4. Portray those who dare to question as “neo-prohibitionists” or other denigrating terms and try and marginalise them

Lawrence Wallack (1992)
Jack Anderson
(1922-2005)

One of the fathers of modern investigative journalism

“The incestuous relationship between government and big business thrives in the dark”
• Get involved in alcohol action

• New Zealand’s harmful drinking culture will not spontaneously change by itself

• The alcohol industry will work very hard to maintain the status quo and their grip on the nation

• The government will not be courageous and stand up to the industry unless they hear the New Zealand public wants them to
Be part of the solution

1. Inform your family, friends, neighbours and colleagues about the ten things the alcohol industry won’t tell them about alcohol

2. Write a submission to the Law Commission about the current harmful drinking culture and the 5+ Solution

3. Encourage your local and national politicians to support the 5+ Solution