

**GINA monthly e-news
September 09**

**Alcohol and Ageing: The
Views of Older Women and
Carers Report Launch**

**Wednesday 28th October 10.00am-3.00pm
Glasgow**



GINA will formally launch our first piece of development research "Alcohol and Ageing: The Views of Older People and Carers" on the 28th October 2009 in Glasgow. The research which was carried out in 2008/2009 aims to promote positive choices about alcohol consumption for older women, enabling them to live healthily and more independently for as long as possible. It will be formally launched by a representative from the **Scottish Parliament Cross Party Group on Drug & Alcohol Misuse**. The event will also have contributions from **Professor Moira Plant, University of West of England**, GINA Chairperson and one of the UK's foremost experts on women and alcohol issues, as well as from participants from the research itself. You will have the opportunity to meet members of the research team which includes **Alcohol Focus Scotland, the Princess Royal Trust for Carers, Scottish Pensioners Forum, Age Concern and Help the Aged Scotland**. There will also be space after lunch to discuss the recommendations contained within the report and in particular

to look at ways of taking them forward to further develop the work and understanding in this area.

The launch event is **free** and is aimed at **all** who work in settings where alcohol issues forms part of their remit. It is intended for a broad audience of practitioners and workers.

For more information on the launch and on how to reserve your place please email gina@alcohol-focus-scotland.org.uk or telephone Rachel Brooks on 0141 572 6590.

In the news . . .

'Addiction gene' puts white women at high risk of drink or drug abuse

An "addiction gene" has been identified that makes white women more likely to become dependent on drink or drugs. The breakthrough opens up the possibility of a DNA test to screen for those people who are most at risk of becoming addicted to drugs or alcohol. A study of 3,627 volunteers found women of European origin with a mutated version of a gene, known as P KNOX2, were almost **twice as likely to become substance abusers** as those without the variant. However, no such link was found among black people or men, according to the findings published in the journal Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences. Dr Chen said: "Our findings make an important contribution in reporting PKNOX2 as a candidate gene for substance dependence, particularly for white women in the sample." The researchers said substance abuse is "a complex disorder" influenced by both a person's environment and genetics.

Source: Scotsman.com, 01/09/09

Drinking, Weight, Depression Linked in Young Women: Study

In women under age 30, drinking to excess, overeating and depression may all be tied together, according to new research. A study in the September/October issue of General Hospital Psychiatry found that women with alcohol abuse issues at age 24 had three times the risk of obesity by age 27. And women who were obese at 27, the researchers found, were twice as likely to be depressed by the time they turned 30. Lead study author Carolyn McCarty said: "When you look across time, alcohol use and obesity predicted later depression. The big picture here is that these disorders, though they're different in manifestation and symptoms, appear to be related for some groups of women. " Men in the same age groups did not have the same increased risks, according to the study. How women respond to stress, as well as biological differences in the brain, may play a role in the gender difference, McCarty said.

Source: usnews.com, 17/09/09

Women drink before sex 'because they lack the confidence to do it sober'

Millions of British women drink alcohol before having sex – because they lack the confidence to do it sober, a study claims. Researchers examining the link between sexual habits and alcohol consumption among 3,000 women found that half preferred sex after a drink. The study found that 75 per cent of women like to drink a glass of wine or two immediately before getting into bed with their husband or boyfriend. **Six per cent of women have never had sober sex**, the survey revealed. Kathryn Lakeland of Femfresh, the cosmetics brand which carried out the study, said a lack of confidence was the main concern of most women. She said: "This demonstrates that women feel unable to let their hair down and fully enjoy themselves without something to fuel their inhibitions. But in doing so many women will be losing self control and this is when drunken one night stands are more likely to occur." The study also found that the average woman has slept with eight men, but was drunk with at least five of them. On two of these occasions women could not even remember the man's name the following morning, researchers discovered. One in six women

admitted that they did not have the confidence to sleep with someone when they were sober. Fourteen per cent of women in a relationship said they couldn't face sleeping with their partner unless they had a couple of glasses of wine beforehand.

Source: Telegraph.co.uk, 23/09/09

Scottish alcohol death rates up to six times UK average

New figures show the high death toll from alcohol in health boards and constituencies across Scotland and expose the scale of Scotland's alcohol problem compared to the rest of the UK. Death rates in one constituency - Glasgow Shettleston - are nearly 6 times the UK level or 574% of the UK average. The figures, revealed in a Parliamentary Answer by Health Secretary Nicola Sturgeon, add to the case for the Scottish Parliament to introduce serious measures to address Scotland's relationship with alcohol and support the proposals put forward by the SNP to crack down on cheap alcohol and to encourage responsible drinking.

The ten constituencies with the highest number of deaths as a percentage of the UK death rate (approx 13 deaths per 100,000) are:

Scottish Parliament Constituency	Alcohol related deaths as % of UK average rate
Glasgow Shettleston	574
Glasgow Maryhill	420
Greenock & Inverclyde	371
Dundee East	347
Glasgow Springburn	333
Glasgow Baillieston	331
Dumbarton	307
Glasgow Cathcart	292
Glasgow Govan	289
Paisley South	288

Of the 73 Scottish Parliament constituencies, 64 of them have alcohol related death rates above the UK average and all but one health board has an alcohol related death rate above the UK average. Amongst health boards, Greater Glasgow and Clyde recorded the highest number of alcohol related deaths at 267% or nearly three times the UK average.

Jack Law, chief executive of Alcohol Focus Scotland said: "These shocking figures highlight the links between alcohol misuse and poverty. Although people from across the social spectrum are affected by personal alcohol problems, people in areas of deprivation suffer greater health and social inequalities as a result of problem drinking. Too many communities in Scotland are blighted by alcohol problems. We want to see action on the price of alcohol and its availability - the lure of deeply discounted alcohol comes at a huge cost to families, communities, and services."

Acceptance



Lisa Nicoll will be performing her play 'Acceptance' at Blackburn community centre on Thursday 8 October at 7.30pm as part of Alcohol Awareness Week events. Acceptance follows the story of Scarlet, 30, who since the age of 15 has spent her life trying to fit in and be liked and loved by others – friends, family and men. Pressured by her need to be popular and fit into her surroundings she finds the easiest way to make herself feel confident, strong, chatty and liked is to go out and have a drink. She believes that going out and drinking nearly every night of the week is the

way to make her happy and find the man of her dreams. However in reality her health, relationships and self-respect are all suffering at the hands of her romantic myths and her wanting to find love and be accepted. The play tackles the issue of women and alcohol misuse and has received support and funding from various sources. **The event is sponsored by the Community Action – Blackburn project and is FREE of charge.**

Alcohol and sexual risk survey

The sexual health charity Family Planning Association (fpa) have announced findings from a survey on alcohol use and sexual risks and produced supporting resources to raise awareness. The study, interviewing 1,002 people aged 18–30 who had past experience of both alcohol and sex, found:

- 70% of those who said 'I have taken part in sexual activity with someone and then regretted it later' thought alcohol was a factor
- 28% of all respondents said they had sex with someone they normally wouldn't find attractive, with 73% of them giving alcohol as a factor
- 40% of those who 'had sex with a new partner without using a condom' said that alcohol was a factor
- Of the 9% respondents who said that they have been unable to remember whether or not they had sex or exactly what type of sexual activity took place, 90% of these said that alcohol was a factor in what happened

Julie Bentley, Chief Executive of fpa, said: "People don't go out to take risks, they go out to have a good time. People may start with the best intentions, but drinking alcohol reduces the chances of using a condom with someone new and impairs sexual decision making." The fpa have released a number of supporting resources that can be downloaded from their website www.fpa.org.uk

Events

29 September, Glasgow Women's Aid AGM, 6pm – 8pm CCA

The AGM Includes showing of 'Changing Lives' DVD: Following this, Maria, who appears in the film, will speak about her experience of domestic abuse. There will also be a presentation on the experiences of some of the children and young people who have lived in refuge. More details can be found at <http://digbig.com/5bagmc>

4-10 October, Alcohol Awareness Week

Visit www.alcoholawarenessweek.com for more information.

8 October, Acceptance play, Blackburn Community Centre

See above for more information.

28 October, Alcohol and Ageing Report Launch, 10am – 3pm, Glasgow

Contact GINA for more information.

Training

Women's Support Project offers interagency training workshops, in-house training, seminars and events on violence against women. Some up coming training includes

26 October, 2009, Introduction to Violence Against Women Work

Induction half day session for new workers across statutory and voluntary sectors. Workers will be given the opportunity to discuss areas of violence largely affecting women and children, to look at good practice in responding to survivors and what resources are available to help.

30 October, 2009, Increasing Women's Confidence

Using practical exercises to look at increasing women's confidence and self esteem to assist them to make positive changes. The workshop will be of particular interest to those working with vulnerable groups of women.

More information can be found at
www.womenssupportproject.co.uk

Resources

Pink handbag leaflets



Alcohol Focus Scotland will be running an information stall at Braehead shopping centre in Glasgow for the duration of Alcohol Awareness Week, and GINA will also use this as a location for distributing information, including our popular pink handbag leaflets. The leaflets offer information and advice to women going on a night out. If you would like to order some pink handbags to distribute during Alcohol Awareness Week please contact GINA - gina@alcohol-focus-scotland.org.uk



Free Genderworks DVD and Toolkit from Oxfam

Gender equality is a topic that's never far from the news. And the GenderWorks DVD and toolkit from Oxfam is a free and comprehensive resource for anyone involved with equality issues. The GenderWorks DVD and toolkit is an invaluable reference work for both women's organisations – lobbying for equal rights – and public sector bodies who need to know how to implement existing legislation. The GenderWorks DVD and toolkit will be available free this autumn – or you can order your advance copies by contacting by email to genderworks@oxfam.org.uk

Gender Equality Duty Briefing for Substance Use Agencies

The Stella Project has produced a Gender Equality Duty Briefing for Substance Use Agencies. This document covers the obligations of service providers and commissioners/funders in providing equality of access to services for men and women. The briefing can be downloaded from their website - www.gldvp.org.uk

Funding

Women's Fund for Scotland

The Women's Fund for Scotland (WFS) is dedicated to improving the lives of women and girls across Scotland. The Women's Fund for Scotland raises money from individuals and organisations, which is then distributed through grants to charities and community groups working with and for women. Since its launch in 2002, the fund has awarded more than £850,000 in grants to over 400 projects, supporting the development, self-sufficiency, and economic and social equality of Scotland's women. Grants of up to £5,000 are available for a wide variety of costs and projects, including assistance with the costs of holding events to mark International Women's Day in March each year. Within the Women's Fund programme, there are two categories of grant:

Express Grants, awards of £250 to £2,000

Main Grants, awards of £2,000 to £5,000

To find out more please visit

www.scottishcf.org/

Do you have any information you would like to share with the GINA network?

We would love to hear from you if you have examples of best practice, studies of interest, information on services or upcoming events etc. If so please get in touch.

The next GINA newsletter will be distributed in October 2009.

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