

**GINA monthly e-news
February 09**

**International Women's Day
2009**

International Women's Day 2009 is **Sunday 8th March** and is a major day to celebrate the achievements of women all over the world, past and present. International Women's Day has been observed since the early 1900's and in some countries it has achieved national holiday status.

In the 21st century women have achieved far greater equality in society, both in the public and private sphere and over the years we have seen a change in attitude towards the role and status of women in society. Despite these great improvements for women there are still many areas of life, and many countries, where women remain disadvantaged. However, without forgetting the prevailing problems that face women, International Women's Day adopts a positive tone and celebrates the positives.



International Women's Day events, conferences, seminars, activities and more will be held all over the world to inspire and to celebrate the achievements of women.

A wide range of events are taking place in Scotland to mark the day. There are events taking place in Glasgow, Edinburgh, Cumberrnauld, Argyll, Kinross and Inverness. To find out about these events and to see what events are taking place in your area, please visit the International Women's Day website which has details of events taking place all across the UK and the world. Also, if your organisation is planning an International Women's Day event of your own you can promote it for free on the website.

www.internationalwomensday.com

In the news . . .

Stroke risk from alcohol

Women who consume more than two alcoholic drinks a day have a higher risk of getting the most common type of heart rhythm disturbance, which can raise the chances of having a stroke. Previous research has shown that men who drink three or more alcoholic drinks a day have an elevated risk of atrial fibrillation (heartbeat irregularity), but the risk for women had not been clear. Researchers in the US and Switzerland tracked 34,715 middle aged American women for more than 12 years who did not have atrial fibrillation at the outset of the study. There was no increased risk for the vast majority who drank either no alcohol or up to 2 drinks daily. But those who drank more had a 60% increased risk of atrial fibrillation. Another study found that people who occasionally binge drink may have a heightened long-term risk of suffering a stroke, even if they do not regularly drink heavily.

Source: [The Herald, 08/12/08](#)

Drinking while pregnant 'makes child like alcohol'

Drinking while pregnant can produce children who will find alcohol attractive a study suggests. The researchers said teenagers found the smell of alcohol more appealing if their mothers had drunk while they were in the womb and this could increase their chances of suffering a drink

problem in later life. The study, which used rats, showed that by the time offspring hit adolescence they responded more strongly to the smell of alcohol on others if they had been exposed to it before they were born. Steven Youngentob from the State University of New York who led the study said "These results highlight an important relationship between fetal and adolescent experiences that appears essential to the progressive development of alcohol abuse." His team believes that being exposed to alcohol in the womb trains the brain to make the smell more appealing. This happens to all mammals, including humans, they believe.

Source: [The Daily Telegraph, 15/01/09](#)

'Drink link' to premature birth

Doctors say women who drink heavily early in a pregnancy - possibly before they know they are pregnant - may be raising the risk of premature delivery. A study of 4,719 Australian women found almost an 80% higher risk for women who drank heavily in the first third of pregnancy, then stopped. However, experts warned it was possible the results were a "statistical quirk". The British Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology study found no evidence of problems for women who drank low levels throughout pregnancy. The subject of alcohol and pregnancy has been controversial, with some guidelines advocating no alcohol intake, while other specialists believe that drinking small amounts is unlikely to harm the developing child. The latest study suggests that the period during which binge or heavy drinking can have the greatest effect is during the first trimester. The editor of the British Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Professor Phillip Steer, said the study represented a warning to women. He said: "When you consider the number of pregnancies which are not planned, it is quite possible that by the time a woman realises she is pregnant, it is too late and the damage has been done."

Source: [BBC online 21/01/09](#)

Wine may prevent dementia in women

Drinking a small glass of wine a day could protect women against dementia, scientists have claimed. Research at Glasgow University suggests that moderate alcohol

consumption may improve the function of older women's brains. Doctors analysed more than 5800 people aged 70 to 82 with memory and language tests. Although results among male drinkers and non-drinkers were similar, women who consumed between one and seven units of alcohol a week performed significantly better than those who rarely drank or were teetotal. The study concludes that one to seven units of alcohol a week may delay cognitive decline and dementia - a degenerative condition that affects memory, attention, language and problemsolving. David Stott, professor of geriatric medicine at Glasgow University, said, "We found that modest amounts of alcohol in women seem to be associated with a delay in cognitive decline, such as speed of thought and how you use language and words. If these become serious, they can be signs of dementia. This is not an endorsement to drink to excess large amounts of alcohol will damage your brain; but the occasional tippie may do you some good".

Source: [Courier and Advertiser, 29/12/08](#)



The Gender and Access to Health Services Study

The Department of Health commissioned the Men's Health Forum to explore the role of gender in access to health services. The report explores reasons why gender remains such an important determinant of health status and considers the ways in which gender inequalities can be tackled within the present legislative and policy framework. Alcohol misuse is one of the main health

concerns covered in the report. Some key messages highlighted in the report include –

- There is some evidence that women feel more stigmatised over alcohol misuse than men and this may affect the way they respond to services
- Conversely, women are more likely to access some treatment services than men
- Among chronic problem drinkers, men are more likely than women to attempt suicide (39% compared with 8%)
- GPs identify more men than women with alcohol dependence syndrome up to the age of 65 years; thereafter there is little gender difference.

Other health concerns examined in the report are cardiovascular disease, weight, mental health, cancer and sexual health. The report can be downloaded online at www.dh.gov.uk

Alcohol and pregnancy campaign update

Alcohol Focus Scotland and GINA ran an alcohol and pregnancy campaign during November 2008. An evaluation form was emailed to everyone who received posters and leaflets to ask for their views on design, messages, how they used the resources, ideas for improvement and whether they would support a future campaign. The responses were very positive and we received some great feedback from the campaign. The simple design and to the point message of the poster and leaflet were very popular, and the materials were displayed in a wide range of places all across Scotland, such as antenatal classes, pharmacies, surgeries, and health events. After the success of the campaign we are hoping to repeat it, depending on funding, in the spring. Thank you to everyone who supported the campaign.

Events



3 March 2009, Scottish Network of Alcohol Practitioners for the Young: launch and event conference, Dynamic Earth, Edinburgh

£40 per delegate (includes lunch and parking).

It is estimated that at least 65,000 children in Scotland are living with the effects of parental alcohol misuse. Two reports, the Scottish Executive's Hidden Harm - The Next Steps and Have We Got Our Priorities Right?, a Think Tank report published by the Aberlour Childcare Trust, identified that improved, earlier identification, better multi/inter-agency working and better informed practitioners will be key to improving these children's lives.

This conference will further examine these issues, giving good practice examples from within Scotland as well as looking at approaches taken elsewhere to see if they can be successfully applied here to help address children and young people affected by alcohol misuse. The conference will focus on children's resilience and how we can support them for a better future.

This event will give those who work with children and young people affected by alcohol an opportunity to hear and discuss the issues that matter most. If you are interested please call 0141 572 6294 or email snapy@alcohol-focus-scotland.org.uk

17 February 2009, NHS and Women - 10.30am - 3 pm, Dumbuck House Hotel, West Dunbartonshire

To Celebrate the 60th Anniversary of the National Health Service the Scottish Women's Convention are holding a Roadshow to hear the views of Women in

West Dunbartonshire. This is a free event. To register please call 0141 248 8186 or email

mary@scottishwomensconvention.org

11 March 2009, 2009 Rape Crisis Centre Conference 'For Better Or Worse?': Intimate Partner Sexual Violence, Glasgow

The aim of the conference is to raise awareness about levels of intimate partner sexual violence and to discuss this issue. If you are interested in attending please call 0141 552 3201 or email info@rapecrisiscentre-glasgow.co.uk.

17 March 2009, Violence on the Streets: The Impact of Drugs and Alcohol in Pregnancy, McDonald Rooms Conference Centre, Edinburgh

A range of national and international experts have been assembled for the programme of this conference, to highlight the needs of the children involved and ways in which their long-term needs can be diagnosed. To book a place please call Charlotte Lindsell on 020 7520 2880 or email charlotte@parentsforchildren.org.uk or visit www.parentsforchildren.org.uk

Resources



Rory learning resource

Alcohol Focus Scotland has developed a learning resource that tackles the issue of harm caused to children because of parental alcohol problems. Teachers, counsellors and social workers can use the pack in different ways to help children understand the feelings they might experience when living with someone who has an alcohol problem and encourage children to speak to a trusted adult.

The Rory learning resource pack contains:

- Rory story book
- Mp4 player
- Rory puppet
- Activity pack (games, worksheets, stickers, kennel build game)
- Guidance notes

The Rory learning resource pack costs £129 or £85 without the mp4 player. Please order by calling 0141 572 6700 or emailing enquiries@alcohol-focus-scotland.org.uk

Funding

The Drinkaware Trust awards small grants of between £100 and £2,500 to local community (and occasionally national) initiatives designed to promote responsible drinking and reduce alcohol related harm. The Trust funds projects ranging from public education campaigns, peer-led education schemes, educational theatre work, conferences, provision for educational materials, training, workshops to other educational events. This is a rolling programme with no application deadlines. <http://www.drinkaware.co.uk/grants>

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 March 2009.

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