

GINA monthly e-news November 08

Hidden harm – both ends of the spectrum

Alcohol Focus Scotland held their Annual General Meeting on Wednesday 8th October, which was attended by a wide range of individuals who either work in or have an interest in the field of alcohol in Scotland. The theme of the AGM was 'Hidden Harm – Both ends of the Spectrum', looking at hidden harm for both children and older people.

The issue of hidden harm for children was presented by two speakers; Alan Sinclair and Joy Barlow. Joy Barlow, Head of STRADA, gave an overview of the situation, having written extensively on the impact of parental substance misuse on children and families. Alan Sinclair's presentation followed and affirmed the devastating effect that can be caused by parental alcohol misuse with a message that "children are a reflection of the world in which they develop".



At the other end of the spectrum, Mary Gilhooly, a Professor of Gerontology in the School of Health Sciences and Social Care at Brunel University, spoke about whether or not alcohol consumption amongst baby boomers will be a threat to healthy ageing.

She believes that the baby boomers are not going to be as healthy in old age as the current generation of elderly people, and that alcohol will play a big role in this. Professor Gilhooly pointed out that a growing elderly population, coupled with increasing alcohol consumption amongst older people, could put a huge strain on the health and social services and that we may be facing a demographic time bomb.

The 'Both ends of the spectrum' theme demonstrates that alcohol misuse is not restricted to 16-24 year olds binge drinking at the weekend, as it is often portrayed in the media. Alcohol misuse is an issue that can affect us from cradle to grave, in all stages of life.

With this in mind GINA has started to focus on the way alcohol affects women in different life stages. This work has been started with the issue of older women and alcohol. We also hope in the future to focus on other specific life stages for women. An older women and alcohol fact sheet has already been produced and will be uploaded onto the GINA website shortly.

In the news . . .

Women 'unaware of alcohol threat'

Women do not know about one of the biggest health risks linked to drinking too much - a raised chance of breast cancer, says a survey. While most knew that excessive alcohol intake could lead to liver disease or liver cancer, fewer than one in five linked it to breast cancer. An estimated four million UK women drink more than recommended levels. While there are many different risk factors for developing breast cancer, including family history and obesity, the association between alcohol and breast cancer is well established. There are more than 45,000 new cases of breast cancer in the UK every year, and the "lifetime risk" of developing it is approximately one in nine. Women who drink one large glass of wine a

day, which means 21 units of alcohol a week compared with the recommended 14, increase this by a fifth. Drinking two glasses a night boosts it by a third, while three big glasses mean more than a 50% increase. The survey found that 82% of women were not aware of the connection, compared with 95% who did link it to liver disease, and 71% who were aware it raised the risk of liver cancer. Minister of State for Public Health Dawn Primarolo said "It's shocking, even for me, to see the potential risks of drinking over recommended guidelines in black and white." [Source: BBC news online, 17/10/08](#)

Parents 'under drugs suspicion'

One in five children thinks their parents have tried drugs and one in 10 believes they still take them, a survey in England and Scotland suggests. Some 90% of the 500 teenagers polled by charity Addaction said they were "against" drugs, but one in 10 thought celebrities made drugs seem "cool". Of 2,000 adults polled, 63% worried that stories about celebrity drug-taking would influence children. Addaction said it wanted to "improve dialogue" within families about drugs. The charity is launching a £10m appeal to help young people struggling with substance abuse - either their own or that of someone close to them. Deborah Cameron, chief executive of Addaction, said "We want to encourage a much more open dialogue within families about drugs and alcohol. Good lines of communication can prevent problems from snowballing. Addaction is appealing for £10m to provide programmes to support young street drinkers, young people at risk of exclusion from school and children who are living with drug- or alcohol-dependent parents. Later this month the charity will also launch an online guide to dealing with drug and alcohol problems within the family.

[Source: BBC news online, 05/10/08](#)

Third of routine drinkers get potentially fatal liver damage

One third of routine drinkers sustain enough liver damage to put themselves at risk of an early death, researchers have found. A study at University College London found an unexpectedly high level of liver abnormalities among "normal working people" who consume more alcohol than average but would not regard themselves as

alcoholics. Professor Rajiv Jalan, Head of the Liver Failure Group at University College London hospitals and one of the authors of the study, said "These are people working in offices who we routinely encounter". They are representative of working people in our society and they are at risk." The results showed at least 30 per cent of the people tested had liver abnormalities. Deaths from the disease have increased by eight times in men aged 35 to 44 and by seven times in women over the past 30 years. Doctors warn that symptoms of liver disease are not felt until too late and by that time patients have up to a 50 per cent chance of dying early.

[Source: The Telegraph Online, 27/10/08](#)

Campaign to challenge perception of rape



An advertising campaign challenging the perception that some women are partly to blame for being raped was launched last month. Rape Crisis Scotland said it hoped its campaign, entitled 'This is Not an Invitation to Rape Me', would help increase the country's 2.9% rape conviction rate. Billboards and posters will be displayed across the country featuring women in a number of scenarios including ones in which they are wearing revealing clothing or have been drinking. Rape Crisis Scotland said the attitudes of society continued to play a significant role in limiting justice for women who have experienced rape. It added that "careless judgements" were often made, based on what a woman was wearing, her behaviour and her alcohol intake. Research conducted by the organisation earlier this year found that 27% of Scots believed that women who dressed in revealing clothing

could be at least partly responsible for being raped. A further 24% thought women were in some way responsible if she was drunk and 29% thought a woman contributed to rape if she was flirting. Of those questioned 15% believed a woman could be partly responsible for rape if she was known to have had many sexual partners.

Source: *The Herald* 16/10/08

New film about women and alcohol

Northern Constabulary has launched a new film aimed at women aged between 18 and 25 which seeks to address the issues surrounding the excessive consumption of alcohol by this group. The film graphically highlights the consequences of the choices young women make in relation to alcohol. The four minute film, produced by Edinburgh based Hee Haw Productions, is called *Tonight You Decide*. You can watch the film online at www.tonightyoudecide.com

Anti binge drinking campaign online

The Home Office have launched a video channel on the video sharing website, Youtube. You can go there to watch Home Office campaign advertisements, such as their anti binge drinking campaign. To watch the videos visit <http://uk.youtube.com/homeoffice>

Events

20 November 2008, Glasgow Women's Voluntary Sector Network, Open Space Event - Glasgow

GWVSN are keen to increase their membership and identify the key issues currently affecting women and women's organisations. If you are already a member of the Network this is your opportunity to come together with other like-minded workers (paid and unpaid) to discuss the issues facing women and our sector and to

influence the work of the Network. If you are new to the Network, this event will allow you to find out more about who they are and what they do. To find out more please visit <http://enf.org.uk/blog/?p=623>

21 November 2008, Addiction and the Family Conference - Bristol Marriott Hotel

The Alcohol and Health Research Unit at the University of the West of England is joining forces with experts from the Mental Health R&D Unit of the University of Bath and Avon and Wiltshire NHS Trust to stage a major international conference that investigates the impact of addiction on families. For more information contact Jan Green, Alcohol & Health Research Unit, University of the West of England. Tel: 0117 328 8800 or email: jan.green@uwe.ac.uk

Training

27 November 2008, LGBT Domestic Abuse Project Training Course - Edinburgh

The LGBT Domestic Abuse Project recently secured funding to deliver a training course specifically for LGBT organisations across Scotland. This training will be useful if you have never previously had domestic abuse training as it will examine the dynamics and impact of domestic abuse with a focus on LGBT people experiencing domestic abuse. The training is not just for people providing direct support to LGBT people but also for anyone who is working for LGBT people. For further information please contact info@lgbtdomesticabuse.org.uk or visit www.lgbtdomesticabuse.org.uk

9 December 2008, 9.30am - 12.30pm, Positive Action in Housing: Diversity & Equality Training - PAiH, 98 West George St, Glasgow

The legislative background for equality and diversity has expanded and increased over the last three years, with new and amended legislation to all equality strands, including race and ethnicity, age, disability, gender, faith and belief, and sexual orientation, as well as Human Rights. The aim of this

course is to ensure that attendees are aware of this legislation, and what this means in practice for organisations. Contact Zandra@paih.org

Resources

How much is too much leaflet

For many young people, drinking alcohol is a part of life. But how much do they know about how alcohol affects the body – both now and later on? This NHS leaflet, which was updated in May, will help younger people make choices about how much they drink. The leaflet can be downloaded at www.dh.gov.uk

Older women and alcohol fact sheet

GINA has produced a fact sheet that explores the use of alcohol in later life, with special emphasis on older women. The fact sheet can be downloaded from the GINA website.

Alcohol and pregnancy campaign materials

Alcohol Focus Scotland and GINA's alcohol and pregnancy campaign will be running throughout November. If you would like some posters or leaflets to display, free of charge, please get in touch with GINA.



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 December 2008.

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