

Big Alcohol

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Why talk about alcohol?

- The harmful use of alcohol results in approximately **2.25 million deaths per year**
- World's **3rd largest risk factor for disease and disability**; in middle-income countries it is **No 1**
- Alcohol is a **causal factor in 60 types of diseases and injuries** and a component cause in 200 others.
- Almost **4% of all deaths worldwide are attributed to alcohol**, greater than deaths caused by HIV/AIDS, violence or tuberculosis.

Why are we not talking about alcohol?

- The evidence is less clear than on tobacco i.e. low/minimal risk levels of drinking exist
- It is a legally consumed food product
- Many government departments deal with it i.e. trade, taxation, food standards, health, agriculture, licensing, policing, transport
- It is a very profitable industry with strong economic power

How does Big Alcohol compare?

Revenues from global **tobacco sales** are estimated to be close to **\$500bn** generating combined profits for the six largest firms of **\$35 bn**

In 2008, global **alcohol sales** were estimated at **\$1,163 bn** and profits from the leading six companies of **\$48 bn**

COMPANY	PROFIT for 2012
Diageo	3.2bn £
Anheuser-Busch InBev's	15.5 billion \$
SABMiller	5.6 billion \$
Bacardi (Revenue)	5 billion \$
Constellation Brands	5.2 million \$
Pernod Ricard	8.6 billion €

What are the prospects for Big Alcohol?

- The global alcoholic drinks industry is expected to exceed \$1 trillion in 2014
- Volume of consumption is predicted to reach almost 210 billion liters in 2014, a 10% increase in five years
- The EU represents almost 57% of the world alcoholic drinks market

Big Alcohol – learning from the playbook of Big Tobacco

- **Deny there is a problem**
- **Limit product liability and transfer responsibility to consumers**
- **Claim behaviour cannot be regulated**
- **Undermine independent scientific research**
- **Insist on being part of the solution, while denying responsibility for the problem**
- **Create additional organisations to fill the policy space**

Deny there is a problem

- Faced with growing evidence, acknowledge that a very **small minority of people** 'misuse' their products
- Frame attempts to regulate or control their product as a **disproportionate response to a small problem**



Limit product liability

- The product is a legitimate and legal consumer product → it is the **behaviour of the consumer that is at fault**
- Alcohol producers are **distanced** emotionally, legally and financially from the harm caused



Drinking behaviour cannot be regulated, so don't try

- Behaviour cannot be controlled by legislation
Therefore legislation is an inappropriate policy option
- Use the failure of prohibition as an example of how regulation does not work



Undermine independent scientific research

- Fund academics and research that supports the industry position, e.g highlighting positive aspects of the product from a social, cultural or health perspective.

sm/society/2013/sep/01/wine-benefits-mental-health-spanish-study

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A glass of wine a day may be good for mental health, Spanish study finds

Researchers find people who drink two to seven glasses of wine a week are less prone to depression

Stephen Burgen in Barcelona
theguardian.com, Sunday 1 September 2013 15.14 BST
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The Benefits of Moderate Beer Consumption



The Brewers of Europe

Insist on being part of the solution

- Encourage multi-stakeholder processes → Use these to **establish the industry as an equal and legitimate stakeholder** in **health** discussions
- Delay, block or challenge proposed policy actions



Create additional bodies to fill the policy space

- designed to act as counterweight to NGOs
- they are both advocacy and corporate social responsibility bodies
- industry messages can be passed by seemingly independent organisations

drinkaware.co.uk
for the facts about alcohol

talking alcohol.com



International Center for Alcohol Policies
Analysis. Balance. Partnership.

Change might be slow but not impossible - we need to encourage:

- Shift in attention on and understanding of alcohol = it is bad for health and carcinogenic
- Shift in governments 'frame' to understand alcohol = it is health issue should be dealt by Health Departments
- Evidence plays a key role in the process = acceptance of the unequivocal alcohol is harmful scientific evidence

*One person with a belief is equal to a
force of 99 who have only interests*

John Stuart Mill

Thank you for your attention