

LESS ALCOHOL WEBINAR SERIES

Addressing blind spots to accelerate implementation of effective policy interventions 2022

The year 2022 marks a turning point in global policy action against alcohol consumption, after countries adopted a [new action plan for the 2022–2030 period](#). The Less Alcohol Webinar Series, first launched in 2021, is one among many efforts to support this policy commitment. Each webinar in the series aims to leverage the latest available evidence and know-how from countries to quicken progress in tackling critical *blind spots* for the effective implementation of alcohol control policies. In its initial year, the series engaged more than 40 speakers from over 80 countries across all WHO regions, reaching nearly 1 000 attendees.

Over the course of 2022, a range of priority blind spots requiring collective thinking will be explored. These include considering the public health effects of zero and low-alcohol beverages, the need for gender-responsive alcohol control policies, the impact of increased availability of home delivery alcoholic beverages, and the challenges posed by *alcogenic* settings and cultures, among others.

Importantly, the discussions that transpire during each webinar inform the further development of a summary document on that topic. The resulting brief is ultimately a “snapshot” of the evidence, experiences from countries, stakeholder insights and expert opinion. These briefs are published in a parallel series. For more information on the “Snapshot Series” and the briefs developed through the 2021 edition of the series, visit the publications of the Less Alcohol Unit [here](#).

Adopting a health promotion approach

The health, social and economic consequences of alcohol consumption are alarming. Adopting a health promotion approach aims to mitigate the burden of ill-health, disease and disability attributable to alcohol by recognizing that all individuals are embedded in systems and influenced by their lived environment, which affects their behavioural choices and subsequently, health and social outcomes. In practice, and in the context of the Less Alcohol Webinar Series, attention is called to three key determinants driving the consumption of alcohol: acceptability, availability and affordability (1). Addressing each determinant requires a portfolio of health promotion interventions to moderate alcohol consumption and, in turn, enable populations to increase control over and improve their health. Each topic addressed through the series aims to explore the available interventions and support the acceleration of implementation efforts.

Target participants

This series is intended for a broad audience, including people working in public health, and local and national alcohol control policy, policy-makers from national, regional and local administrations, government officials, researchers, civil society groups, consumer associations, the mass media, and people new to alcohol control policy, research or practice.



Attending a webinar

All webinars are free to attend. Registration in advance is required and can be completed via webinar-specific registration links shared by invitation. The webinars are 90 minutes in length and are held in English, in some cases with simultaneous interpretation to other languages. In advance of each webinar, a detailed programme of speakers and spotlight countries is announced, together with a concept note outlining the topics the webinar aims to address. Following each webinar, a recording is posted online. To be informed about forthcoming events you can subscribe [here](#).

Webinar topics 2022

Cross-border alcohol marketing, advertising and promotion

10 May 2022, 13:00 CET

Alcoholic beverages are increasingly being marketed across national borders, often by digital means, and often regardless of the social, economic or cultural environments of the receiving country. The marketing of alcohol increases alcohol consumption, and targeted marketing increases consumption among the targeted audiences, including heavy drinkers. In the context of increasing cross-border alcohol marketing, advertising and promotion, this webinar aims to address: what are the current and emerging practices in low- and middle-income countries? And, what are the current and emerging needs in countries?

Co-organised with the Alcohol, Drugs and Addictive Behaviours Unit, Department of Mental Health and Substance Use, World Health Organization.

Zero and low alcohol beverages: real improvement or apparent solution?

23 June 2022, 13:30 CET

Zero and low-alcohol beverages (NoLos) have been recently introduced on the market. While ultimately accounting for only a small share of the market for alcoholic beverages, consumption trends have been growing in recent years. Importantly, the available evidence on their effects remains limited. At the individual-level, NoLos could have the potential to generate health improvements, if their consumption leads to overall lower levels of alcohol consumed (2, 3). At the population-level, concerns have been raised about the impact of NoLos in reducing the harm caused by alcohol consumption or the several possible drawbacks and implications (4, 5). In this webinar dedicated to NoLos, the discussion aims to explore: what are the potential gains yet hidden pitfalls of NoLos? And, what policy and regulatory gaps need critical attention as their consumption grows?

Co-organised with the Istituto Superiore di Sanita, Italy.

Restricting alcohol availability: how can common barriers can be overcome?

3 October 2022, 14:30 CET

Alcohol physical availability – how easy or hard it is to obtain alcohol – is a key driver of alcohol consumption and its related harms (6). Despite the potential for evidence-based, cost-effective interventions to restrict alcohol availability and promote health gains, progress has been slow (7). Hurdles can arise when implementing evidence-based alcohol availability policies, but they are surmountable. In this webinar, invited experts will share country experiences and evidence-based strategies to promote alcohol availability laws



in practice. Topics to be explored include describing first-hand experiences with alcohol industry interference, community campaigns against the sale of alcohol and strategies for effective liquor license protest hearings, also from the perspective of liquor licensing officers.

Men, women and alcohol: what are the dangers of gender-blind alcohol control policies?

25 October 2022, 9:30 CET

Structural gender inequality and other social determinants of health, legal and corporate structures, access to alcohol and the physical and social contexts of drinking interact with men and women's perceptions and consumption of alcohol, which in turn impact on alcohol-related health and social harms (1). Despite these differences, the potential impact of gender on population-level alcohol control policies has been largely ignored (8). However, implementing gender responsive alcohol control policies will require a better understanding of how attempts to reduce alcohol-related harm might impact differently on men and women, and address any unintended consequences. In this webinar exploring gender differences in alcohol control policies, the following key questions will be discussed: what evidence do we have about whether gender impacts policies which seek to address alcohol availability, affordability and acceptability, and what gaps are there? What examples do we have from civil society and community-based organizations about the impact of alcohol on men and women and what can we learn from local initiatives? *Co-organised with the Substance use research group at the Glasgow Caledonian University*

Alcogenic settings: de-normalising a culture that promotes drinking

November 2022, 13:30 CET

Alcogenic settings have been linked to heavier alcohol drinking, which in turn is an established risk factor for disease, injury and death. The *alcogenicity* of an environment (mostly driven by a high alcohol outlet density and unregulated alcohol advertisements) is strongly associated with hazardous alcohol consumption (9-12). The targeted marketing and advertising of alcoholic products contributes to an *alcogenic* environment by influencing not just alcohol consumption, but also promoting the development of positive personal alcohol-related beliefs and attitude and influencing social norms by expanding environments where alcohol is socially acceptable (13, 14). The culture surrounding alcohol consumption varies within and across countries and world regions (15), and a culture of drinking has been widely acknowledged to influence alcohol-drinking practices (16, 17). In this webinar, different cultural norms across varied settings and regions will be explored, ultimately with the aim to investigate: how can a culture that promotes drinking be denormalised?

Questions?

Subscribe to the [Less Alcohol newsletter](#) to be notified of upcoming events related to the webinar series as well as new publications and announcements. If you have any questions, comments or suggestions for a topic that has yet to be explored, contact the team at lessalcohol@who.int.

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