



ADD Fact Sheet:

World Medical Association 2005 on alcohol

Latest updated 30.01.2007

The General Assembly of the World Medical Association (Santiago 2005) discussed the reduction of the global impact of Alcohol on Health and Society. In the resolution from the Assembly, the following recommendations were made:

The WMA urges National Medical Associations and all physicians to take the following actions to help reduce the impact of alcohol on health and society:

11. Advocate for comprehensive national policies that
 - a) incorporate measures to educate the public about the dangers of hazardous and unhealthy use of alcohol (from risky amounts through dependence), including, but not limited to, education programs targeted specifically at youth;
 - b) create legal interventions that focus primarily on treating or provide evidence-based legal sanctions that deter those who place themselves or others at risk, and
 - c) put in place regulatory and other environmental supports that promote the health of the population as a whole.

12. Promote national and sub-national policies that follow 'best practices' from the developed countries that with appropriate modification may also be effective in developing nations. These may include setting of a minimum legal purchase age, restricted sales policies, restricting hours or days of sale and the number of sales outlets, increasing alcohol taxes, and implementing effective countermeasures for alcohol impaired driving (such as lowered blood alcohol concentration limits for driving, active enforcement of traffic safety measures, random breath testing, and legal and medical interventions for repeat intoxicated drivers).

13. Be aware of and counter non-evidence-based alcohol control strategies promoted by the alcohol industry or their social aspect organizations.

14. Restrict the promotion, advertising and provision of alcohol to youth so that youth can grow up with fewer social pressures to consume alcohol. Support the creation of an independent monitoring capability that assures that alcohol advertising conforms to the content and exposure guidelines described in alcohol industry self-regulation codes.

15. Work collaboratively with national and local medical societies, specialty medical organizations, concerned social, religious and economic groups (including governmental, scientific, professional, nongovernmental and voluntary bodies, the private sector, and civil society) to:

- a) reduce harmful use of alcohol, especially among young people and pregnant women, in the workplace, and when driving;
- b) increase the likelihood that everyone will be free of pressures to consume alcohol and free from the harmful and unhealthy effects of drinking by others; and
- c) promote evidence-based prevention strategies in schools.

16. Undertake to

- a) screen patients for alcohol use disorders and at-risk drinking, or arrange to have screening conducted systematically by qualified personnel using evidence-based screening tools that can be used in clinical practice;
- b) promote self-screening/mass screening with questionnaires that could then select those needing to be seen by a provider for assessment;
- c) provide brief interventions to motivate high-risk drinkers to moderate their consumption; and
- d) provide specialized treatment, including use of evidence-based pharmaceuticals, and rehabilitation for alcohol-dependent individuals and assistance to their families.

17. Encourage physicians to facilitate epidemiologic and health service data collection on the impact of alcohol.

18. Promote consideration of a Framework Convention on Alcohol Control similar to that of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control that took effect on February 27, 2005.

19. Furthermore, in order to protect current and future alcohol control measures, advocate for consideration of alcohol as an extra-ordinary commodity and that measures affecting the supply, distribution, sale, advertising, promotion or investment in alcoholic beverages be excluded from international trade agreements.

The full text of the resolution:

<http://www.wma.net/e/policy/a22.htm>