



FOURTH ANNUAL CARIBBEAN ALCOHOL REDUCTION DAY

Women and Alcohol

Friday December 6th, 2019

Concept Note

The HCC will be hosting The Fourth Annual *Caribbean Alcohol Reduction Day* on Friday December 6th, 2019 under the theme: Women and Alcohol.

Alcohol affects men and women differently, giving rise to unique gender-based vulnerabilities. For CARD 2019, the theme is Women and Alcohol. *IF YOU DRINK ALCOHOL - DRINK LESS. IF YOU DON'T DRINK - DON'T START.*

Justification

The harmful use of alcohol, along with tobacco use, unhealthy diet and physical inactivity, is recognized as one of four major common risk factors for NCDs; yet alcohol has received comparatively less attention than the other 3 risk factors. Alcohol consumption contributes to 3 million deaths each year globally and harmful use of alcohol is responsible for 5.1% of the global burden of disease. Alcohol is the leading risk factor for premature mortality and disability among those aged 15 to 49 years, accounting for 10 percent of all deaths in this age group. Alcohol and its over use, contributes to a number of cancers, liver disease, cardiovascular disease, mental illness, violence, accidents and injuries. A major global study published in the Lancet in 2018 concluded that 'alcohol is a colossal global health issue' and there is 'no safe level of alcohol consumption'.

CARD 2019 focuses on women and alcohol and the unique public health and NCD-related concerns linked to alcohol consumption among women. Alcohol use not only increases a woman's risk of liver and cardiovascular diseases, cancer and assault, but consumption of alcohol during pregnancy increases the risk of miscarriage, stillbirth, premature deliveries, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders, and Sudden Infant Death Syndrome. Alcohol use is also linked to breast cancer among women. Historically, alcohol use and its consequential health issues are more prevalent in men than in women. However, emerging evidence reveals an epidemiological change in alcohol use in younger cohorts, and further demonstrates that women suffer with more severe health and social problems at the hands of alcohol. Further, alcohol metabolism occurs differently in women due to differences in body structure and chemistry, leading to greater absorption of alcohol and delayed excretion. The risk of an alcohol injury is higher for women than men after about 3 drinks, with an exponential increase in risk in any injury, including road injuries.

Global alcohol consumption is steadily increasing in the Americas and worldwide, with this trend predicted to continue up to the year 2030. The 'absolute number of currently-drinking women' has risen worldwide. Alcohol-attributable deaths among women make up 2.6 percent of all global deaths. The 2018 WHO Global Status Report on Alcohol and Health estimates that 46 million women have alcohol use disorders globally. The highest prevalence of these disorders among women, occurs in the Americas (5.1%). In the Americas, among women, rates of heavy episodic drinking (HED) increased from 4.6% in 2010 to 13.0% in 2015. In Trinidad and Tobago in 2016, the prevalence of heavy episodic drinking among women 15 years and older was 13.3% and 12.1% in St. Kitts and Nevis. Alcohol consumption patterns among girls in the Caribbean are alarming, with 54% of 13-15-year-old girls in Dominica reporting having drunk at least one alcoholic drink in the past 30 days. In Barbados, 88.6% of girls aged 13-15, who reported previously having had a drink of alcohol, had their first drink before the age of fourteen. More than three-quarters (78.7%) of Jamaican girls, 13-15 years, admitted to drinking quantities that made them really drunk, one or more times during their life.

Alcohol is cheap, readily available and heavily marketed in the Caribbean. Furthermore, the alcohol industry plays a significant role in Caribbean economies. As a result, Caribbean people, including women are growing up in societies where alcohol is seen a cultural norm. Alcohol is being consumed at earlier ages and women are being encouraged to drink as much as their male counterparts.

Despite the endorsement of the [Global strategy to reduce the harmful use of alcohol](#) in 2010, there has been little global and regional progress in curbing alcohol consumption across all sectors of society. Implementation of the WHO Best Buys to reduce the harmful use of alcohol in the Caribbean has been abysmal. Only a handful of countries in the region have prioritized alcohol control and developed policies however these are largely in draft. At the global level, WHO recently released the 2018 [Global Status Report on Alcohol and Health](#) and launched the [WHO SAFER](#) action package designed to assist member states in fast tracking alcohol policy implementation in support of achieving the global target of reducing harmful use of alcohol by 10% by 2025. SAFER provides five high-impact strategic actions that are prioritized for implementation to promote health and development.

Last year on November 29th, 2018, the Healthy Caribbean Coalition (HCC) held the "Third Annual Caribbean Alcohol Reduction Day: YOUTH: Let's Talk About Alcohol". The initiative was aimed at creating public and policymaker awareness about young people and alcohol consumption in the Caribbean.

This initiative continues the longer-term efforts to foster wider stakeholder involvement, with official sponsorship of the initiative by PAHO, and CARPHA.

The Fourth Annual Caribbean Alcohol Reduction Day – 2019

The Fourth Annual *Caribbean Alcohol Reduction Day* will be held on Friday December 6th, 2019. The theme will be: Women and Alcohol.

The objectives of the 2019 CARD are to:

1. Increase public and policymaker awareness about the burden, drivers and impact of alcohol consumption among women in the Caribbean.
2. Sensitise the public about the new [WHO SAFER alcohol control initiative to prevent and reduce alcohol-related death and disability](#) and the [Global Status report on alcohol and health in 2018](#).
3. Call on Policy makers to implement specific WHO SAFER policies to reduce alcohol consumption among Caribbean people including women (WHO SAFER):

1. Strengthen restrictions on alcohol availability.
2. Advance and enforce drink driving countermeasures.
3. Facilitate access to screening, brief interventions, and treatment.
4. Enforce bans or comprehensive restrictions on alcohol advertising, sponsorship, and promotion (across multiple types of media).
5. Raise prices on alcohol through excise taxes and pricing policies.

The dissemination plan for the 2019 CARD will mimic the actions adopted for the 2016-2018 CARD's. Targeted messaging for a cross section of audiences will be developed in support of the theme and policy asks and this messaging will be distributed through the HCC communication channels (HCC Weekly News Roundup, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram) and the channels of key HCC partners. Materials and messages will include:

- Statements of support for the HCC Caribbean Alcohol Reduction Day from regional and international partners.
- CARD Infographics including re-launching of Caribbean Infographics from previous years.
- CARD Webinar
- Links to regional and global resources.
- Links to HCC alcohol related content including webinars.

Partners

PAHO, CARPHA and the CARICOM Secretariat.

Statement of Exclusion

Neither the alcohol industry nor the tobacco industry, nor any persons, institutions, or organisations known to have with relations with these industries will be a partner in the Caribbean Alcohol Reduction Day.

Sources:

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2. Best buys' and other recommended interventions for the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases. Tackling NCDs. <http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/259232/WHO-NMH-NVI-17.9-eng.pdf?sequence=1>.
3. Burton R, Sheron N. No level of alcohol consumption improves health. [https://www.thelancet.com/article/S0140-6736\(18\)31571-X/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/article/S0140-6736(18)31571-X/fulltext)
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5. Global status report on alcohol and health 2018. https://www.who.int/substance_abuse/publications/global_alcohol_report/en/
6. Polcin, D.L. et al. (2019). Randomized clinical trial of Intensive Motivational Interviewing for women: 6-month outcomes. Journal of Psychoactive Drugs.
7. Regional Status Report on Alcohol and Health in the Americas 2015. http://iris.paho.org/xmlui/bitstream/handle/123456789/7670/9789275118559_Eng.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y
8. Slade T, Chapman C, Swift W, et al. Birth cohort trends in the global epidemiology of alcohol use and alcohol-related harms in men and women: systematic review and meta-regression. BMJ Open 2016