Alcohol & Covid 19

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Changes in Purchasing Habits</th>
<th>Health &amp; Social Risks Associated with Alcohol &amp; COVID-19</th>
<th>Alcohol &amp; the Risks of Covid 19 Infections</th>
<th>Alcohol &amp; it’s Burden on the Community</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01</td>
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COVID-19 is having an unprecedented impact on everyone’s day to day life, including the way we drink alcohol. Some jurisdictions have relaxed alcohol licensing restrictions, while others have made them more harsh.

Alcohol consumption via take away and delivery and online ordering are new ways in which persons now have access to alcohol during the pandemic.
Online retailers in Australia & USA, have reported an increase in sales ranging from 50% to 500% over the same period compared to 2019.

Delivery practices found 69% of delivery vendors advertised the willingness to leave alcohol unattended at an address without verifying the purchasers age.

As alcohol markets shift we are concerned that alcohol will be increasing available to intoxicated persons and minors.

Let’s explore how this has affected purchasing habits
Only 20% of retailers stated on their website a policy to refuse delivery of alcohol to intoxicated persons.  

20% of purchasers of on-demand alcohol delivery reported that their motivation for using the service was because they were over the blood alcohol limit to drive.  

36% of service users said they would have had to stop drinking alcohol if the delivery service was not available.  

Let’s explore how this has affected purchasing habits
Health & Social Risks
Associated with Alcohol & COVID-19

**Health Risks**

1. People who drink alcohol to deal with stress can cause or intensify mental health issues, such as anxiety and depression.

2. Regular drinking leads to increased tolerance. Increasing the risk of alcohol dependance.

3. Alcohol is known to interfere with sleep patterns, which can cause irritability or feelings of anxiety the following day.


5. Increase in alcohol consumption may cause alcohol related difficulties such as poisonings and cardiovascular emergencies.

**Social Risks**

1. Persons divert limited economic resources to procure alcohol, instead of buying essential items.

2. Alcohol drinking may become normal/routine for online socializing.

3. Promoting online events during which alcohol consumption is normalized may multiply drinking occasions and increase overall drinking.

4. Health workers may increase their alcohol consumption as a way of dealing with stress and increased work load.

5. Children and adolescents may have easy access to alcohol stockpiled at home and be more exposed to their parents drinking.
Alcohol & the Risks of COVID-19 Infections

Mental Health
Abnormal Alcohol Use increases the risk of mental health disorders, such as anxiety, depression and psychosis.

Immune System
Alcohol reduces the effectiveness of the body’s immune system, making it less able to fight off lung infections, such as pneumonia, COVID-19, ARDS, etc.

Social Health
Alcohol can cause disinhibition which results in poor decision making, which can include not wearing masks or adhering to social distancing.
Alcohol & the Burden on the Community

Rising Levels of Stress & Isolation

- Difficulty in Accessing Services & Support Groups during COVID-19
- Misuse of Alcohol and Other Related Substances
- Negative Impact on Family, Friends, Co-workers and Neighbors
- Increased Severity of Illness
Resources

(1) Covid-19 and Alcohol in Australia: Industry Changes and Public HEALTH Impacts by Stephanie Colbert

(2) Frequently asked questions about Alcohol and Covid-19 by the World Health Organization (Regional Office Europe)
THANK YOU

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