

Alcohol: No Ordinary Commodity

(3rd edition):

From research to public policy

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**As required by the Alcohol Policy 19 Conference,
I have signed a disclosure statement and note the
following conflict(s) of interest:**

None, rien, nada



Evidence to Action: Building a Framework for Change
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ANOC3

Scientific Evidence

in support of
a public health approach

Looking upstream

Ultimately, the value of approaching alcohol problems within a public health framework is that it draws attention to the ‘upstream’ sources of the damage, as opposed to attributing alcohol-related problems exclusively to the personal behavior of the individual drinker.



Strategies and interventions to reduce alcohol-related harm upstream and downstream

Upstream

Regulating the physical availability of alcohol

Pricing and taxation measures

Regulating alcohol promotion

Modifying the drinking context

Drinking-driving countermeasures

Education and persuasion strategies

Treatment and early intervention

Downstream



'Upstream' sources of the damage

- Affordable prices
- Easy availability
- A culture of universal drinking supported by aggressive marketing
- Lack of regulatory controls

ANOC 3 rating system for research on policy strategies and interventions

‘Best Practices’ =

- High in effectiveness
- Supported by numerous studies
- Capable of reaching their target group
- Relatively low in cost

‘Good Practices’

- Less than the maximum on effectiveness and amount of research support, but nevertheless good investment.

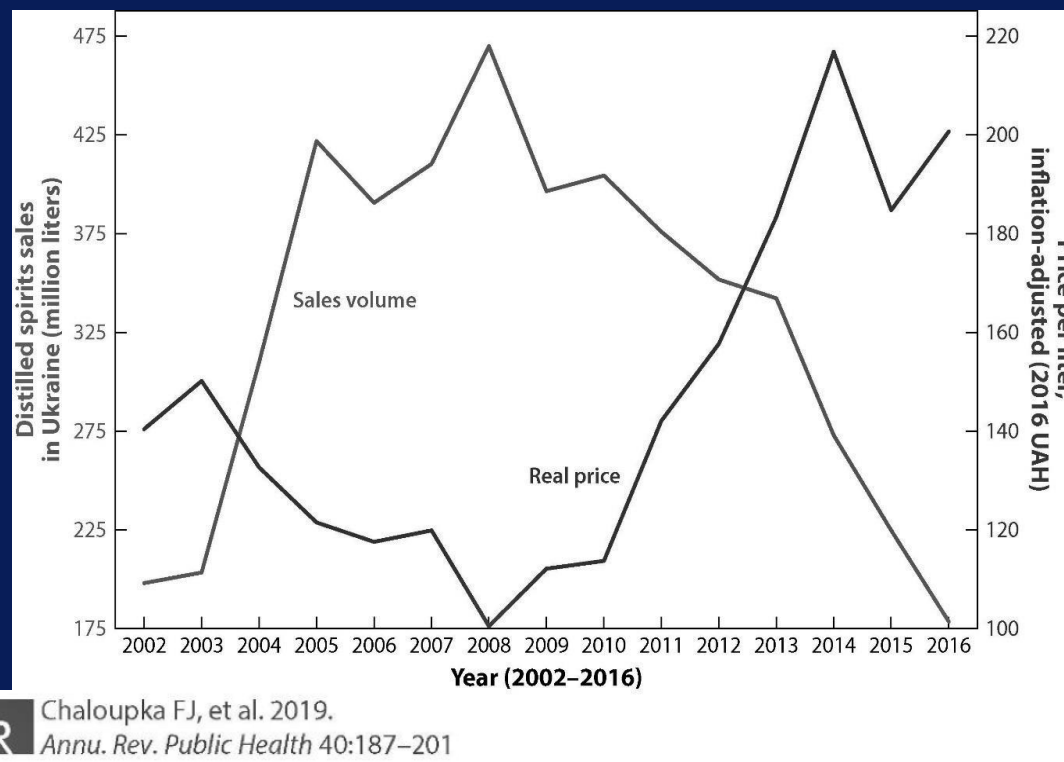
Pricing and taxation policies:

| Policy area | Number of policy options evaluated | Best Practices | Good Practices | Ineffective (or potentially harmful) policies and practices | Comments on mechanisms of action and caveats |
|---|------------------------------------|---|---|---|--|
| Pricing and taxation policies (Chapter 7) | 5 (4 found effective) | Alcohol taxes that decrease affordability | Minimum unit pricing; differential pricing by beverage; special taxes on youth-oriented | Policies that <u>increase</u> the affordability of alcohol | When alcohol becomes less affordable, people drink less and experience fewer problems; when affordability increases, so do drinking and harm. Increased taxes reduce alcohol consumption and harm for the whole society, including heavy drinkers and adolescents. The government also gets tax revenues to compensate society for the costs of treatment, prevention, and enforcement. Alcohol taxes need to be substantial to be effective |

An example of how prices affect alcohol consumption: Distilled spirits sales and prices in Ukraine, 2002-2016

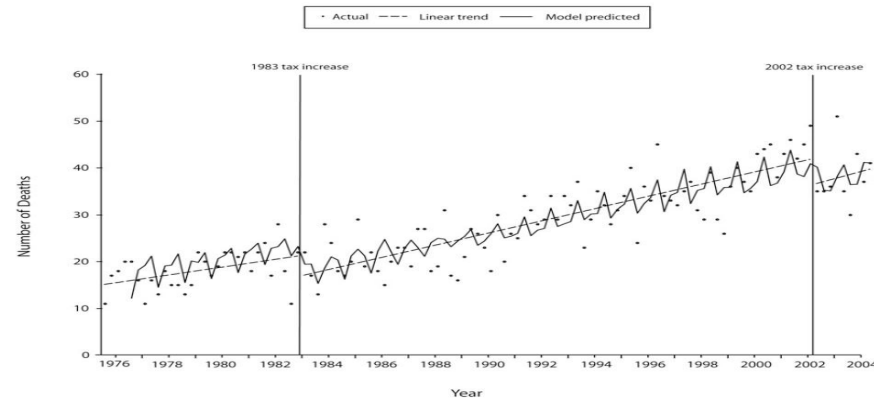
Data from Euromonitor, World Bank, and Chaloupka *et al.*'s calculations.

- Distilled spirits real price, adjusted for inflation, came down after 2003 until 2008, then went up after 2008 until 2014.
- Distilled spirits sale volume went up between 2003 and 2008, then went down after 2008.

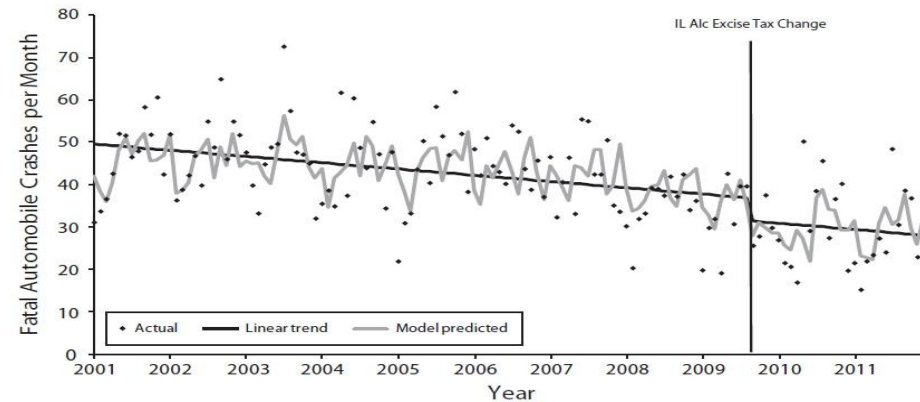


The effects of alcohol taxation on alcohol-related harms

- **Reductions in frequency of alcohol-related disease mortality in Alaska after alcohol taxation increases in 1983 and 2002**
(Wagenaar et al., 2009)



- **A reduction in fatal alcohol-related motor vehicle crashes per month in Illinois after tax increase in 2009**
(Wagenaar et al., 2015)



Alcohol tax policies and mortality: Lithuania

In 2017, beer and wine +110%; spirits +20%

- Mortality gains in the next year (until 1.3. 2018): > 1,000 deaths avoided!
- Fiscal gains



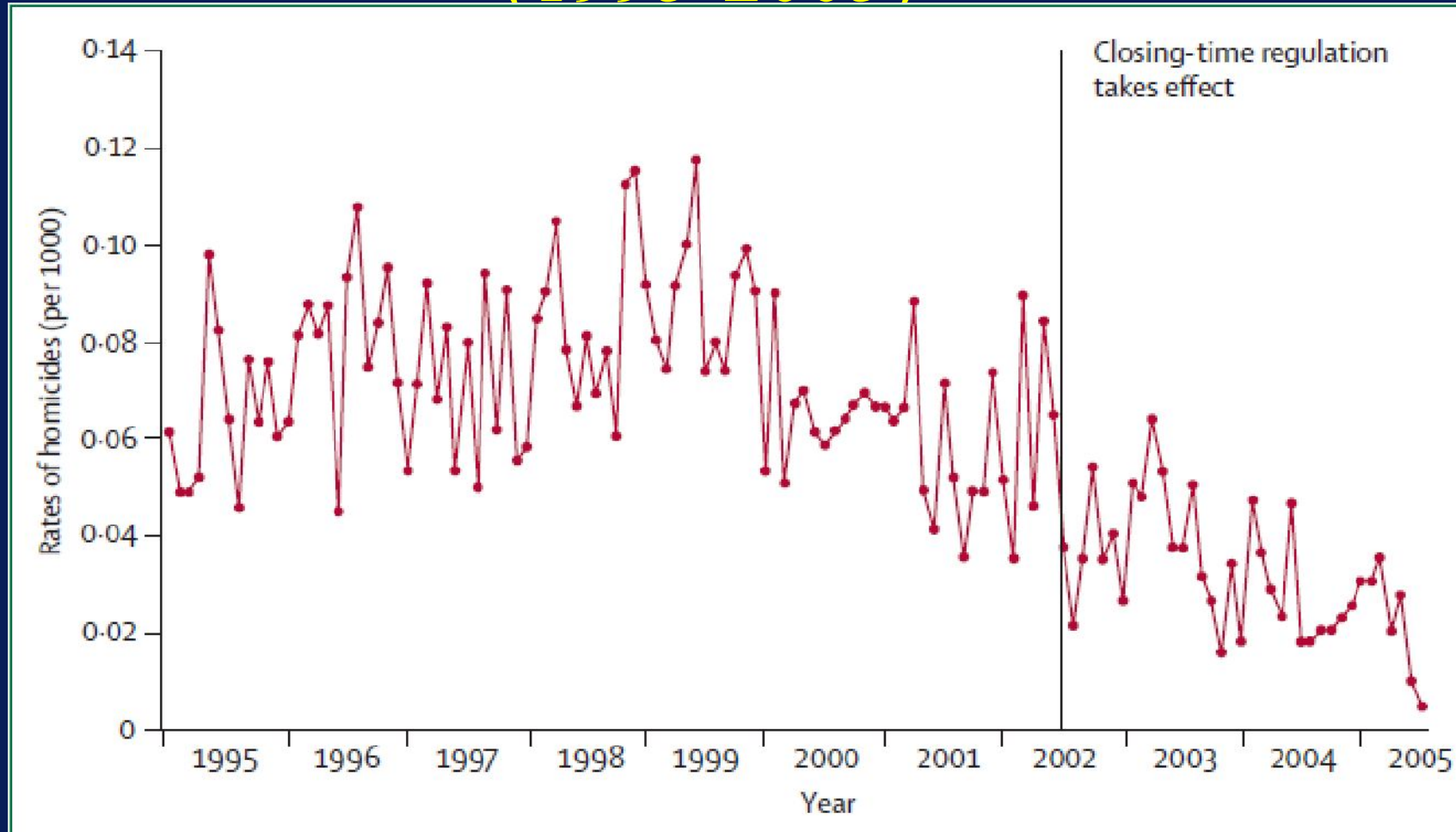
Taxation and pricing: Summary

- Taxation is a win-win policy tool: tax revenue generation and reduced alcohol consumption and problems for the whole society, young people, and heavy drinkers,
- Governments should increase alcohol taxes to reduce affordability, indexed to inflation and income increases over time
- Taxation based on ethanol content is better than taxation based on price
- Increased tax rates are unlikely to increase unrecorded alcohol consumption if
- comprehensive alcohol control measures are implemented simultaneously (including combating production and sale of illegal alcohol products).
- Minimum Unit Pricing measures are effective ways to control the consumption of cheap alcoholic beverages.

Regulating physical availability

| Policy area | Number of policy options evaluated | Best Practices | Good Practices | Ineffective (or potentially harmful) policies and practices | Comments on mechanisms of action and caveats |
|--|------------------------------------|--|---|--|---|
| Regulating physical availability (Chapter 8) | 15 (12 found effective) | Limiting hours and places of sale; public welfare-oriented alcohol monopoly; minimum purchase age laws | Rationing systems; restricting outlet density; individualized permit systems; post-conviction preventive bans; encouraging lower-alcohol beverages; sales ; total bans where supported by religious or social | <u>Policies that increase outlet density and temporal and spatial availability</u> | Regulating who can consume alcohol, or the places, times, and contexts of availability, increases the economic and opportunity costs of obtaining alcohol. Limitations on physical availability, including convenience and legal access (e.g. age restrictions), reduce alcohol consumption and harms. Controls on availability can be imposed at a population level (e.g. hours of sale) or at an individual level (e.g. as directed by a court order). Availability restrictions can have significant impact if enforced consistently |

Closing time: Effects on homicides in Diadema, Brazil (1995-2005)



Regulating Alcohol Availability Through Minimum Legal Purchase Age (MPLA)

- In 1984 the US Congress passed the National Minimum Purchase Age Act, which encouraged states to adopt the age 21 purchase standard
- The number of young people who died in a crash when an intoxicated young driver was involved has declined by almost 63%

Monopoly Systems

- Evidence from USA, Canada, and the Nordic countries shows that retail off-premise monopolies can limit alcohol consumption and alcohol-related problems
- Free trade measures have weakened monopoly system in Nordic countries, the USA and Canada
- Elimination of off-premise monopolies can increase total alcohol consumption and alcohol-related problems

Restrictions on alcohol marketing

| Policy area | Number of policy options evaluated | Best Practices | Good Practices | Ineffective (or potentially harmful) policies and practices | Comments on mechanisms of action and caveats |
|---|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|--|
| Restrictions on alcohol marketing (Chapter 9) | 3 (2 found effective) | Complete ban on alcohol marketing | Partial bans on alcohol marketing | Industry voluntary self-regulation of marketing | Exposure to alcohol marketing increases the attractiveness of alcohol and the likelihood of drinking by young people; restrictions on marketing are likely to deter youth from early onset of drinking and from binge drinking. Exposure to alcohol images and messages can precipitate craving and relapse in persons with alcohol dependence. Extensive evidence of impacts on drinking and experience from tobacco bans suggest a complete ban is likely to be a Best Practice despite lack of evaluated examples |

Other best practices: Drink-driving countermeasures

| Policy area | Number of policy options evaluated | Best Practices | Good Practices | Ineffective (or potentially harmful) policies and practices | Comments on mechanisms of action and caveats |
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| Drink-driving counter-measures (Chapter 11) | 15 (13 found effective) | Low BAC levels for young drivers; intensive breath testing, random where possible; intensive supervision programmes | Low or lowered BAC levels (0.00% to 0.05%); graduated licensing for young and novice drivers; sobriety checkpoints; administrative licence suspension; comprehensive mandatory sanctions; DUI-specific courts; interlock devices | Severe punishment; designated driver programmes; safe ride services; education programmes; victim impact panels | Measures based on the threat of punishment are unlikely to change alcohol-impaired driving, but those aimed at deterring drinking and driving through surveillance measures and limitations on driving (e.g. licence removal) can be effective |

Effects of Alcohol Marketing

- Research shows that alcohol advertising reinforces perceptions of drinking as positive, glamorous, and relatively risk-free.
- Exposure to repeated high-level alcohol promotion inculcates pro-drinking attitudes
- Growing evidence of effect of exposure to alcohol marketing on younger people lowers the age at which drinking starts and increases the amounts drunk by young people

Types of Regulation



- Total bans (e.g., Norway, France)
- Partial bans (e.g., day-time TV)
- Industry self-regulation (voluntary codes of practice that restrict certain content and exposure markets)

Research on industry self-regulation codes

- Studies in the EU, Africa, Australia and the USA show that self-regulation codes are often circumvented and largely ineffective.
- The Precautionary Principle suggests that alcohol promotion communications should be limited in the interests of public health.
- Industry compliance with self-regulation advertising codes should be evaluated regularly for both exposure and content guidelines.

Other best practices: drink-driving countermeasures

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Modifying the Drinking Context

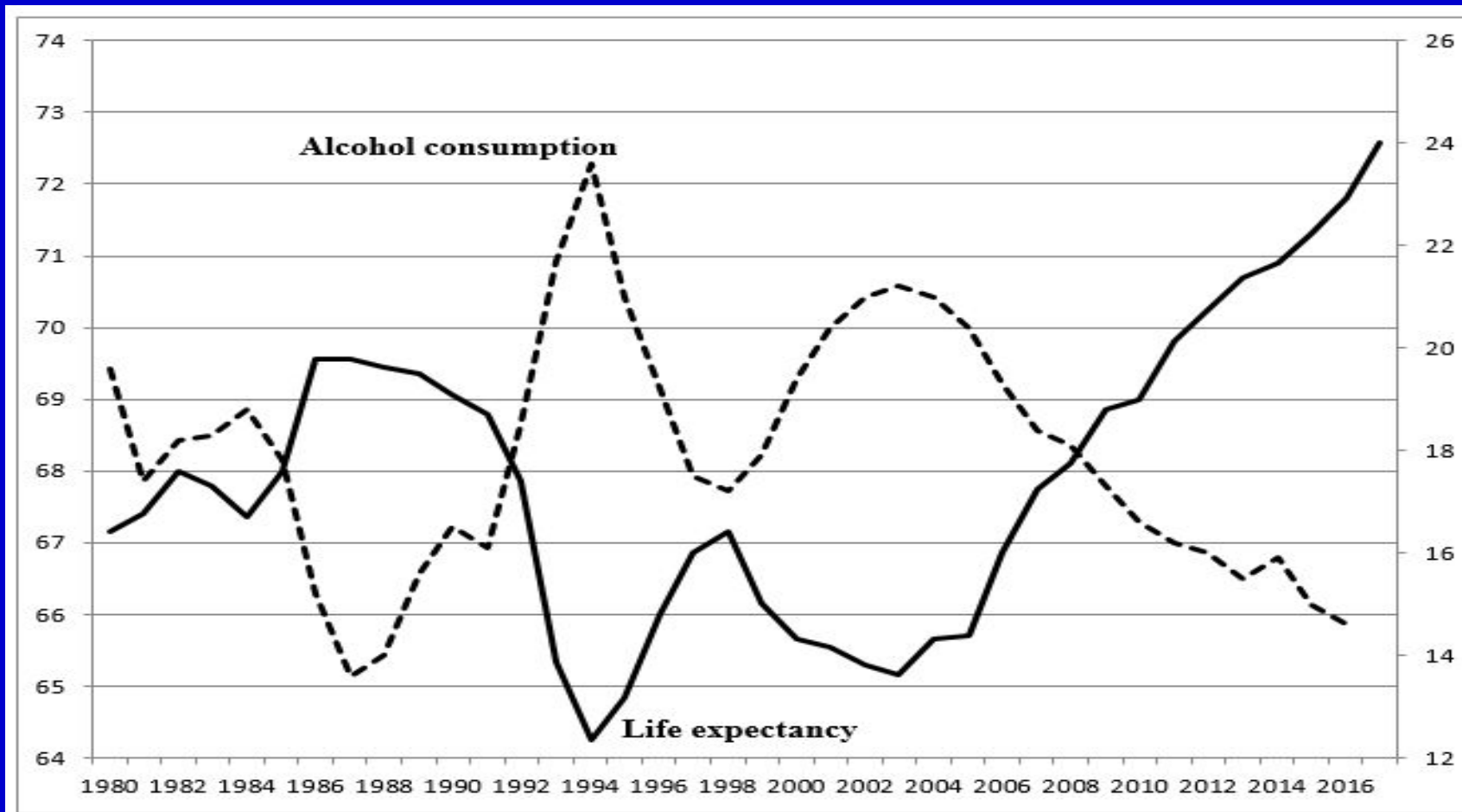
- Re-define the contexts or change the environments where alcohol is typically sold and consumed (e.g., bars and restaurants)
 - Such changes can reduce alcohol-related aggression and intoxication
- Options include training bar staff, imposing voluntary house policies to refuse service, enforcement of regulations, community mobilization to influence problem establishments

Education and persuasion strategies

- Impact generally evaluated in terms of knowledge and attitudes; effect on onset of drinking and drinking problems is mixed.
- Information-based educational messages are unlikely to change drinking behavior or prevent alcohol problems.
- Good practices include: anti-drink-driving campaigns; targeted prevention programs; family-inclusive intervention; some interventions with undergraduate students; brief motivational interventions in school settings; computer-based interventions with selective subpopulations of heavier drinkers
- Industry-sponsored programs and campaigns are ineffective
- Interventions that focus on high risk youth and involve the family are more likely to deter youth drinking.

Treatment and early intervention

- Brief interventions for nondependent high-risk drinkers, behavioral and psychosocial therapies, pharmacological treatment, mutual help interventions and some types of coercive treatment all have good evidence of effectiveness
- Because of low treatment coverage in most countries, and high expense of services, treatment is unlikely to impact aggregate indicators of harm
- Treatment services can contribute to the mix of strategies needed to reduce alcohol problems, but they do not obviate the need for universal strategies that affect the availability, affordability and attractiveness of alcohol.



Relationship between per capita consumption and life expectancy: Russian Federation

Source: Nemtsov A.V. (2015). Alcohol consumption in Russia in 1956-2012]. *Voprosy narkologii*, 5, 3-12.

Conclusions: The global landscape

- Alcohol use continues to be a major risk factor for accidents, injuries, and non-communicable diseases globally.
- The alcoholic beverage industry can be considered an inducer of the growing demand for a wide range of alcohol products designed to increase alcohol consumption in every segment of the global population.
- Expanding economies of Africa, Latin America, and Asia have increased alcohol consumption, but opposition from the alcohol industry has prevented the adoption of policies likely to reduce consumption.
- While universal “upstream” measures (pricing policies, availability restrictions, marketing controls), are the most effective practices, many of the approaches targeted at high risk groups have something to contribute.
- According to the latest alcohol policy research, “Best practices” and “Good practices” are more numerous and more effective than ever
- For alcohol policy to use science in the public interest, there is a need for supra-national mechanisms to address the consequences of increasing globalization of alcohol production, trade, and marketing

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