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► [Alcohol misuse: tackling the UK epidemic.](#)

**British Medical Association Board of Science.  
London: BMA, 2008.**

Report from Britain's trade union and professional association for doctors reviewing the extent and consequences of problem drinking in the UK and making recommendations for government action and evidence-based policies.

**Abstract** After reviewing the extent and consequences of problem drinking in the UK, Britain's professional body for doctors made recommendations to government including:

- Taxation on all alcoholic beverages should be increased at higher than inflation rates proportionate to alcohol content.
- Licensing hours should be cut.
- Town planning and licensing authorities should be legally required to consider the local density of on-licensed premises and the surrounding infrastructure when evaluating any planning or licensing application.
- Licensing legislation should be strictly and rigorously enforced including penalties for breach of licence, suspension or removal of licences, test purchases to monitor underage sales, and restrictions on individuals with a history of alcohol-related crime or disorder.
- Enforcement agencies should be adequately funded and resourced. Consideration should be given to a dedicated alcohol licensing and inspection service.
- Legislation should prohibit irresponsible promotions and set minimum price levels.
- A statutory rigorously enforced new code of marketing practice should ban: alcohol advertising at times likely to be viewed by young people; alcohol industry sponsorship of sporting, music and other entertainment events aimed mainly at young people; marketing alcoholic soft drinks to young people.
- The legal blood alcohol limit for driving should be cut to 50mg/100ml.
- New laws should permit random roadside testing without the need for prior suspicion of intoxication, accompanied by adequate resourcing and public awareness campaigns.
- There should be further qualitative research examining attitudes to alcohol misuse in the UK.
- Public and school-based alcohol education should only be used as part of a wider harm reduction strategy to support policies shown to be effective, to raise awareness of the adverse effects of alcohol misuse, and to promote public support for comprehensive

alcohol control measures.

- Laws should require: alcoholic products to be labelled with their alcohol content in units, recommended daily UK consumption guidelines, and a warning about exceeding these guidelines; all adverts and retail points of sale to display the guidelines and warning message.
- Detection and management of alcohol misuse should be an adequately funded and resourced component of primary and secondary medical care and include: formal screening for alcohol misuse; referral for brief interventions and treatment as appropriate; follow-up care and assessment.
- Comprehensive training and guidance should be provided to all relevant healthcare professionals on the identification and management of alcohol misuse.
- Funding for alcohol treatment services should be significantly increased and ring-fenced to so everyone identified as having severe alcohol problems or dependent is offered referral to these services at the earliest possible stage.
- The need for and provision of alcohol treatment services should be continually reassessed.
- There should be strong support for European Union, World Health Organisation and World Health Assembly initiatives and policies aimed at reducing alcohol-related harm.
- The UK should lobby for and support the World Health Organisation in developing and implementing a legally binding international treaty on alcohol control.

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