

21-SHOT QUESTIONNAIRE

1. If alcohol was an illegal drug, what would be its classification under the Misuse of Drugs Act, using the new 2001 evidence-based criteria?

- a. Class A along with heroin
- b. Class B along with “ecstasy”
- c. Class C along with cannabis
- d. Not prohibited, but regulated

Answer: b. Alcohol has been demonstrated to have the harm equivalent of a Class B drug (High Risk to Public Health), which puts it in the same category as morphine, “fantasy”, “ecstasy” and d-amphetamine.

2. How many New Zealanders die each year of an alcohol-related cause?

- a. 10
- b. 100
- c. 1000
- d. 10,000

Answer: c. A little over 1000, half of which are from acute injury and half from chronic disease. This means about 20 New Zealanders are dying every week from an alcohol-related cause.

4. How many alcohol-related offences are committed everyday in New Zealand according to Police statistics?

- a. 3
- b. 30
- c. 300
- d. 3000

Answer: c. A little over 300, but remember this is the number detected by Police and therefore is a significant underestimate.

5. How many different medical conditions are specifically caused by heavy drinking?

- a. 6
- b. 60
- c. 600
- e. 6000

Answer: b. About 60, i.e. not just liver cirrhosis.

6. Does alcohol increase the risk of cancer?

- a. probably not
- b. possibly
- c. probably
- d. definitely

Answer: d. Alcohol is a Group 1 carcinogen according to the World Health Organisation classification, which means it has been shown to be definitely carcinogenic. New Zealand’s three commonest cancers – breast, prostate and bowel – are each directly linked with alcohol use.

7. True or false? People, especially men, under the influence of alcohol are more likely to act aggressively, but only if they have pre-existing anger in their

personalities.

Answer: False. People, especially men, under the influence alcohol have been shown to administer heavier and more frequent electric shocks to a fake competitor even when they have normal personalities, compared with those under the influence of orange juice.

8. According to two independent scientific studies, how many heavy drinkers are there in New Zealand?

Answer: About 25% of drinkers are heavy drinkers, which is around 700,000 heavy drinkers in New Zealand, the total population of Christchurch and Wellington combined, but this is likely to be an underestimate.

9. What percentage of the heavy drinkers are under the age of 20 years?
a. less than 10% b. 10-20% c. 20-40% d. greater than 40%

Answer: a. Less than 10% of the heavy drinkers in New Zealand are under the age of 20. The heavy drinking culture is essentially an adult problem, not primarily a youth problem.

10. Up to how many New Zealand children are born each year with foetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD)?
a. 3 b. 30 c. 300 d. 3000

Answer: At least 600, but recent New Zealand data shows there are probably more - up to 3000 NZ children born with FASD each year. NB: The lifetime costs of one child suffering foetal alcohol syndrome in the US has been estimated at \$750,000 (Quoted by Easton 2003).

11. Is there such a thing as “safe drinking”?

Answer: No. As in smoking, there is no such thing as “safe drinking”. It is a matter of risk. Low risk drinking has been defined as a 1 in 100 chance of dying over a lifetime of an alcohol related event, which equates to no more than two standard drinks per day. Using the same definition, low risk smoking is less than five cigarettes per week.

12. The total daily energy requirement of a sedentary adult is about 1800 calories. How many calories are there in a bottle of wine?

Answer: About 600 calories. Alcohol can be very fattening.

13. True or false? Over half of the alcohol consumed by New Zealanders is during heavy drinking episodes.

Answer: True. This means that over half of the alcohol industry profit in New Zealand comes from heavy drinking.

14. The Law Commission's final report (2010) pointed to commercialisation of alcohol as a key driver of the problem of alcohol-related harm. What was the specific phrase they used?

- a. inadequately regulated commercialisation of alcohol
- b. excessive commercialisation of alcohol
- c. unbridled commercialisation of alcohol
- d. commercial freedom for marketing and selling alcohol

Answer: c. "unbridled commercialisation of alcohol".

15. True or false? Working out what policies would make a difference to the heavy drinking culture is largely academic guesswork.

Answer: False. Just as for tobacco, there is a strong body of scientific evidence on which alcohol policies would make a difference to reducing alcohol-related problems. A seminal World Health Organisation publication that has assembled this body of literature is "Alcohol: No Ordinary Commodity" (Babor et al 2010).

16. What is the most effective and easily enacted alcohol policy that a government could enact in order to reduce heavy drinking?

- a. Undertake a broad-based educational programme targeting youth
- b. Decrease the % alcohol content of RTDs to a maximum of 5%
- c. Increase the price of alcohol in relation to disposable income
- d. Reduce the hours during which alcohol can be purchased

Answer: c. There is strong evidence supporting this measure.

17. What is the least effective of the following alcohol policies that a government could enact in order to reduce heavy drinking?

- a. Undertake a broad-based educational programme targeting youth
- b. Decrease the % alcohol content of RTDs to a maximum of 5%
- c. Increase the price of alcohol in relation to disposable income
- d. Reduce the hours during which alcohol can be purchased

Answer: a. A large body of research evaluating a wide range of educational programmes and media campaigns demonstrates that these measures are largely ineffective. They may change knowledge in some cases but do not change behaviour.

18. “Loi Evin” is the name of the strategy that has brought the marketing of alcohol into line with marketing restrictions for tobacco in France. Did the Law Commission recommend a similar strategy be adopted in New Zealand?

Answer: Yes, but this has not been included in the Alcohol Reform Bill (2011).

19. Internal industry memos have revealed alcohol policy that is feared the most by alcohol corporations. Which of the following is it?

- a. increase in excise taxes
- b. reduce marketing of alcohol
- c. reduce the blood alcohol limit for adult driving
- d. all of the above

Answer: d.

20. How many people with a drink-driving conviction in New Zealand receive an alcohol assessment as part of sentencing?

- a. about 50%
- b. 20-30%
- c. about 10%
- d. less than 5%

Answer d.

21. Where did the following sound-bite originate? “The majority of people who drink do so responsibly, so it would be unfair to penalize the majority to pay for the actions of a few”

- a. Hon Peter Dunne, Associate Minister of Health
- b. Hon Simon Power, Minister of Justice
- c. Hon John Key, Prime Minister
- d. Alcohol and tobacco industry public relations

Answer: d. This phrase originated from PR representatives of Philip Morris and the Miller Brewing Company specifically to divert public discussion away from effective alcohol policies such as increased excise tax and advertising restrictions. It has become a standard part of speeches by a number of senior politicians.

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