

# **Synthesis Report on the Effectiveness of Alcohol Education in Schools in the European Union**

*for*

***European Alcohol and Health Forum  
Forum Plenary Meeting  
12<sup>th</sup> November 09***

*Georgina Cairns, Ross Gordon, Kathryn Angus  
Institute for Social Marketing  
University of Stirling and the Open University*

# Outline

- Background
- Review Methodology
- Key Findings
  - European experience
  - International evidence base
- Conclusions

# Background

- Forum request 11.3.09
  - Anderson and Baumberg (2006) provided summary and key conclusions based on the English-language evidence base to 2005
  - Gap in published evidence base on non-English, European language apparent
- Rationale for update synthesis of systematic literature reviews (SLRs) and meta-analyses for EU

# Methodology: Terms of Reference

- Outcome evaluation to include alcohol behaviours.
- Included all substance misuse intervention, which include measures of alcohol behaviours.
- Aim to identify examples of best practice / case studies in EU27 member states.
- Grouped by conceptual approach with particular attention to family, home and welfare context.
- Synthesis of evidence base to 2005, post-2005 reviews and EU-based primary research.

# Methodology: Literature Search

## Inclusion criteria:

- Full/ partially school-based,  $\leq 18$  years target audience.
- Includes measure on alcohol behaviour effects.
- Publication date 2005 – August 2009.
- Not quality assessed.

## Database search strategy

- Run English and non-English language searches.
- Three academic databases.
- General and database specific search terms.

# Review Methodology

- Identification of relevant literature based on consensus of 2 reviewers.
- Data exclusion tables and data extraction tables provide record of assessment.
- English language abstracts used to identify non-English language papers requiring full translation and review.
- Case study synopsis for all recent EU studies.
- Summary of recent review literature.
- Any reporting on cost-effectiveness noted.

# Findings:

## Recent EU Interventions

- Reported interventions in Austria, Belgium, Germany, Greece, Italy, Netherlands, Spain, Sweden
- Approaches: life and social skills; family based; social influences; social learning; community systems; targeting early childhood disruptive behaviours
- Evidence of small sustained effects for 1 (of 2) social influences project, (1 of 2) family-based interventions; 1 (of 1) community systems approach
- Evidence base insufficient to draw any conclusions on cost effectiveness

# Findings:

## Systematic Review Evidence Base

Jones et al (2007) Review for National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence

- Lack of evidence for sustainability of effects on behaviour. Knowledge and attitudes change.
- Family-based approaches and life-skills training most promising, need further development and evaluation
- Substantial additional investment not justifiable.
- Some interventions associated with undesirable outcomes. Piloting recommended
- Education should be minor part of broader strategy.

# General Conclusions

- Consensus within evidence base, including Foxcroft et al (2002), Babor et al (2003), Anderson & Baumberg et al (2006). Jones et al (2007).
- Review of recent EU interventions broadly in alignment.
- Insufficient evidence for recommendations on 'best practice' or cost-effectiveness.
- Contextual factors such as school culture, community change positively associated with reduced misuse. Integration recommended to enhance effectiveness.
- Better research and evaluation (consistency of measures, better quality reporting) needed.

# Thank you for your attention

Email: [ism@stir.ac.uk](mailto:ism@stir.ac.uk); [g.a.cairns@stir.ac.uk](mailto:g.a.cairns@stir.ac.uk)

Website: [www.ism.stir.ac.uk](http://www.ism.stir.ac.uk)

**This paper was produced for a meeting organized by Health & Consumers DG and represents the views of its author on the subject. These views have not been adopted or in any way approved by the Commission and should not be relied upon as a statement of the Commission's or Health & Consumers DG's views. The European Commission does not guarantee the accuracy of the data included in this paper, nor does it accept responsibility for any use made thereof.**