Alcohol and Policy Propositions

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Alcohol Consumption by Gender and Country

- **High-income countries**
  - Women: 72%
  - Men: 83%

- **LMICs**
  - Women: 8.9%
  - Men: 20%


**Health and Societal Burden of Alcohol Use**

- **Economic Burden of Alcohol Use**
  - Economic costs include health system cost and out of pocket expenditure for treatment of co-morbidities
  - HICs and MICs spend 1% of their GDP on attributable economic costs for alcohol use
  - Societal burden of alcohol for a LMIC such as India amounts to USD 1867 billion

- **Societal Burden**
  - 5.3% of all global deaths (approx. 3 million) are attributed to alcohol use.
  - Alcohol is known to cause cancer of oral cavity and pharynx, larynx, esophagus, liver, stomach, breast, colon and rectum. Association has also been shown between alcohol and cancer of pancreas and prostate.
  - Common causes of death due to alcohol include – injuries, diseases of digestive system, cardiovascular diseases, infectious diseases and cancers.
  - In HIC, 20% of fatally injured drivers were found with excess blood alcohol and 33%-69% of road traffic fatalities in LICs were attributed to alcohol use.


**Total number of deaths due to alcohol associated cancers (2019 – GBD)**

**Deaths, number**

- Legend:
  - High SDI, Both sexes, All Ages, Total cancers, risk: Alcohol use
  - Low SDI, Both sexes, All Ages, Total cancers, risk: Alcohol use
  - Middle SDI, Both sexes, All Ages, Total cancers, risk: Alcohol use
  - Low-mid SDI, Both sexes, All Ages, Total cancers, risk: Alcohol use
  - Global, Both sexes, All Ages, Total cancers, risk: Alcohol use
  - Low-middle SDI, Both sexes, All Ages, Total cancers, risk: Alcohol use
Policy Propositions for Reducing Burden of Cancer

- Globally, 4.2% of all cancer deaths are attributable to use of alcohol and 10.3 million cancer disability-adjusted life years were lost due to alcohol use.
- For each associated cancer, the more alcohol a person consumes, the higher is the cancer risk. Even small amounts of alcohol consumption is linked with increase in risk of breast cancer.
- No level of alcohol is safe of healthy for consumption.
- Worldwide, the awareness of people regarding alcohol and cancer risk is low. It is lower than knowledge about tobacco and cancers.

THE MYTH OF THE J-CURVE

Risks, attributable to alcohol drinking, increase for all the major cardiovascular diseases. Evidence on cardio-protective behavior of alcohol is based entirely on non-randomized studies.

Misclassification of former drinkers with lifetime abstainers – this contaminates the abstainer reference group as former drinkers may possibly have worse health profiles.

GLOBAL EFFORTS FOR REDUCING BURDEN OF ALCOHOL USE

- In 2010, during the sixty-third session of the World Health Assembly, 193 member states reached consensus to reduce the harmful use of alcohol by adopted resolution WHA63.13.
  - The World Health Assembly recognized the close links between harmful use of alcohol and socio-economic development of a country.

- In 2018, the WHO launched the SAFER Alcohol Control Initiative for:
  - **Strengthening** restrictions on alcohol availability
  - **Advancing** and enforcing drink driving countermeasures
  - **Facilitating** access to screening, brief interventions and treatment
  - **Enforcing** bans on alcohol advertising, sponsorship and promotion
  - **Raising** prices on Alcohol

- WHO Global Action Plan for Prevention of NCDs called for 10% relative reduction in harmful use of alcohol
  - India has set a country target for 10% reduction in prevalence of alcohol

There is an urgent need for a comprehensive and multi-sectoral country-level approach that engages CSOs and NGOs

Policy measures such as increase in legal age to drink alcohol, leads to less drinking in adolescence and development of more moderate drinking patterns and less frequent harmful drinking patterns as adults

Research on effectiveness of alcohol policy measures more common on HICs. Need more research from LMICs

National monitoring systems are needed that not only capture data on prevalence but also monitor social consequences and alcohol policy responses

Call for Framework Convention for Alcohol Control to counter supportive alcohol environments
Thank You.

Any Questions?

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