Scientific umbrella organisation

Aiming to improve digestive health

Uniting 30,000 specialists from every field in digestive health
Alcohol and digestive diseases: Why actions are needed?

Lifestyle factors have a significant impact on digestive diseases. Alcohol consumption, in particular, is a risk factor in over 60 types of diseases, with nearly 30% of deaths from gastrointestinal diseases directly attributed to alcohol.

Digestive cancers, including esophagus, stomach, pancreas, liver, small bowel or colon cancer, affect both men and women and are the leading cause of cancer related death in Europe.

Evidence shows a direct correlation between drinking culture and higher cancer risk, with heavy episodic drinking being associated with a higher incidence of digestive cancers.
ALCOHOL & DIGESTIVE CANCERS

Europe has the highest rate of alcohol consumption per capita in the world.

Europe has the highest proportion of total ill health & premature death due to alcohol in the world.

20% of the European population (aged 15+) are drinking heavily at least once a week.

90% of people are unaware that alcohol increases the risk of cancer.

The alcohol-cancer relationship:

1 alcoholic drink per day increases the risk of oesophageal cancer.

4 or more alcoholic drinks per day increases the risk of gastric cancer.

1-4 alcoholic drinks per day increases the risk of colorectal cancer.

1-4 alcoholic drinks per day increases the risk of liver cancer.
Reducing the burden of alcohol consumption: Time for change

With even moderate drinking having a significant impact on increasing the risk of digestive cancers, it is more vital than ever for government action and intervention to reduce the harmful use of alcohol.

There needs to be a shift in attitudes towards social drinking to address the complacency concerning the negative effects of alcohol. Investment in public and primary care education campaigns is needed to reduce the general lack of awareness about the impact of even moderate regular drinking on digestive cancers.

Appropriate policy response has to be comprehensive: policies that increase the price of alcohol, reduce availability, improve the publicity on the risks and increase the minimum age to buy alcohol.