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Newsletter

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Study shows that young people need to understand about units and guidelines

A new University of Sussex-led study reveals that many young people still lack the knowledge and skills required to follow the government's guidelines for responsible alcohol consumption in the UK.

According to research led by Dr Richard de Visser, a senior lecturer in Psychology at Sussex, young people are highly likely to underestimate their own consumption of alcohol units, even if they have some knowledge of government guidelines.

The study, which is published in *Drug and Alcohol Review*, involved surveying 18–25 year-olds about their knowledge and beliefs about safe drinking. The participants were then asked to pour their usual measure of a drink (wine, beer or vodka), followed by what they believed to be a unit of that particular drink. Nearly two thirds of participants underestimated the unit content of the drinks they had poured. Fewer than half the respondents gave correct responses to five of the seven questions about government guidelines, although most were able to correctly state the recommended daily units for men and women.

“Our results indicate that young people tend not to possess the knowledge and or skills required to drink alcohol in accordance with government guidelines” says Dr De Visser. “Using drink-pouring tasks as part of this education could promote better understanding of alcohol units and more accurate reporting of alcohol consumption.”

AET Teaching Tips

- Go to www.alcoholeducationtrust.org and under the resources tab go to units and guidelines chapter – here you will find blank and completed worksheets on units and guidelines to use in class.
- Try the unit calculator in class, which allows pupils to work out how many units are in particular drinks, available via: <http://www.nhs.uk/Tools/Pages/Alcohol-unit-calculator.aspx>
- For your own interest you can download a drink tracker iphone App via: <http://www.nhs.uk/Tools/Pages/iphonedrinks.aspx>
- There is also a film clip made by the BBC about units via: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-15501779>

Talkaboutalcohol Parent Presentations

This half term has seen a busy programme of presentations to parents in schools on ‘Talking to Kids about Alcohol’. These can be adapted to different formats to suit your needs, for example -



The Twynham School in Christchurch, Dorset asked us to host a workshop as part of their Year 7 induction evening for parents. Over 100 parents attended the event and were told by the school how active parenting (varying from checking homework to bonding through attending sports matches) increases GCSE attainment by at least one grade. Parents were given a choice of workshops and had a chance to see what would be taught via PSHE on alcohol as well as having an opportunity to estimate units and alcoholic strengths of different drinks, to watch a short DVD and to ask questions in an informal setting.

Sutton Grammar School for Boys in Surrey hosted a ‘talkaboutalcohol’ evening, open to all parents of boys aged 11+. Over 40 parents attended and the mix of ages allowed a range of discussion between parents about how their kids change from age 14 upwards and the problems they had encountered. Tips were exchanged about hosting teenage parties, what to do if things do go wrong and how to tackle parents who have different attitudes regarding alcohol to yourself.



SUTTON GRAMMAR SCHOOL

To arrange a talk for parents in school, please email jane.hutchings@aim-digest.com. Please give us a terms notice, we have some slots left for the Summer Term and are taking bookings for the Autumn Term.

Teacher Training Events

On Friday 9th March, our Director showcased the AET materials at an alcohol and drug and risky behaviours training day for the secondary schools and colleges across Hampshire hosted by **Hampshire County Council Prism Network** (services for schools, pupils aged 10-16). Over 40 schools and colleges attended to be updated on the most recent Ofsted and Department for Education Guidance on PSHEE and to have the opportunity to meet approved alcohol, drug and tobacco Educators, Charities and County providers. Hants has a resource library of many materials that schools can borrow from for PSHEE enrichment.

A mixture of short presentations, work shops and an opportunity to network gave the teachers the chance to share best practice and common experiences and complexities in providing engaging PSHEE lessons and drop down days.

This follows similar events held for Bath and North East Somerset and Dorset. Please contact helena.conibear@aim-digest.com to arrange a training session.



New Ofsted inspections - the importance of PSHE Education

New Ofsted inspection arrangements are in place from January with a stronger emphasis on lessons. It is therefore likely that PSHE education lessons will be inspected as part of a school's overall provision.

Read the PSHE Association briefing to help you understand what inspectors will focus on, and how high quality PSHE education can help your school achieve 'Outstanding' status at:

http://www.pshe-association.org.uk/news_detail.aspx?ID=1242&dm_i=HSS.OI1O.3W0E60.1Z77H.1.

Supplementary subject specific guidance for PSHE education is also available from the link above.

New Drug Advice for Schools from DfE and ACPO

Despite being non-statutory this new guidance strongly recommends that schools continue to have *'a written drugs and alcohol policy to act as a central reference point for all staff'*.

It also recommends that responses to drug and alcohol related incidents in schools are most effective when drug and alcohol education is part of a well-planned programme of PSHE education. At the same time it is recommend that elements of the older, 2004 guidance are still used to support the teaching of drug and alcohol education within your PSHE education curriculum.

The 2004 document contains very useful advice on the knowledge, understanding and skills needed by pupils and advice to teachers on the best teaching and learning approaches to drug education.



Alcohol Education key to tackling 'binge-drinking' culture

The PSHE Association welcomes Prime Minister David Cameron's recent call for supermarkets, the drinks industry and bars to do more to help ensure responsible drinking.

They do however stress the need for preventative measures and the importance of alcohol education being taught within a planned, coherent and effective PSHE education programme for all pupils from an early age by trained and confident teachers.

Shadow Minister for Public Health, Diane Abbott has also called for such measures, suggesting that: *"We should equip young people with the skills they need to resist peer pressure to go out drinking. There are concrete lessons to be learnt from overseas, where tried and tested programmes aim to reduce alcohol and substance abuse through classroom-based education. These types of programmes have had excellent success rates. All the evidence suggests that trying to intervene at older ages, when behaviours are more set, is too late."*

Resources provided by the Alcohol Education Trust (AET) provide a sound basis for such work in secondary schools.

Follow the link for further information http://www.pshe-association.org.uk/news_detail.aspx?ID=1262

How many 12-13 year olds are drinking, who with and why?

- Key findings from our baseline survey



As many of you know, we are in the middle of evaluating our resources among 4,400 Year 8 pupils across 33 schools in England. 16 schools (called intervention schools) will receive lessons from The Alcohol Education Trust teacher workbook and use the websites and leaflets, while the remaining 17 schools (our control) will not at this stage. We have now had the results of our first questionnaire, which is administered in class before any alcohol education takes place.

A high proportion of the children enjoyed school and felt their life was going well (86% and 87%). They were on time and didn't skip lessons (85% and 83%) and 85% and 87% enjoyed good health with a similar proportion feeling they had someone to talk to if they were worried. However 7% said they were unhappy or depressed and 1% played truant or skipped lessons, with 4% considering they weren't well behaved.

Of the 4,400 12 and 13 year olds surveyed, 41% of intervention pupils, 43% comparison pupils had had a whole alcoholic drink - some by age 10. Intervention: 18% aged 10, 28% 11, 28% 12 and 3% 13. Comparison: 20% aged 10, 26% 11, 28% 12 and 3% 13

Most had experienced drinking at home, when parents were there (56% intervention, 66% comparison) and usually at a special event (e.g. wedding/party) (25% and 19%). Most only drink on special occasions (70% and 72%) and with their parents or carers (74% and 78%). It appears their parents don't mind as long as they don't drink much (74% and 77%). 2% were drinking in an unsupervised environment (park or outside), 3% when parents were out and 5% at friends houses. Very few had felt pressured into drinking (3% and 2%) and 4% had been tempted by alcohol in shops.

Most have *never* got drunk/binge drink (68% and 71%); 12% and 11% have once; but worryingly 11% and 12% have done so more than once. The pupils motivations for drinking were: special occasion (89% intervention, 92% comparison), they liked the taste (53% and 52%), it made them feel grown up (22%), it is fun (21% and 16%), sociable and relaxing (20% and 25%) or risky and exciting (16% and 11%). 4% claimed they often had a hangover and 1% had passed out from drinking. 1% had also tried other drugs often and 3% 'at least once'. 1% had been in trouble with the police 'often and a further 2% at least once.

For the 59% and 57% of pupils who had never tried alcohol, their reasons were that they know it is dangerous for their health (76% intervention, 64% comparison). That it is against the law to buy alcohol when under 18 (59% and 60%) and they are aware of negative aspects (56% and 53%).

All the cohort had good awareness of the health effects of excessive drinking and the law regarding underage drinking, but had a poor understanding of the physical or social effects of alcohol, why guidelines differ for men and women and over estimated the number of underage teenagers who do drink in the UK.

Our next follow up of these students will be in July 2012

For further information and/or to request resources please contact

Helena Conibear, Founder/Director
helena.conibear@aim-digest.com

Jane Hutchings, Schools Coordinator
jane.hutchings@aim-digest.com

The Alcohol Education Trust
Frampton House - Frampton
Dorset - DT2 9NH

Telephone 01300 320869

www.alcoholeducationtrust.org

www.talkaboutalcohol.com

