The potentials of environmental prevention

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LxAddictions
Environmental substance use prevention interventions in Europe
1) It’s all about personal responsibility, right? … or about education …
Figure 1: How Food Marketing Influences Overeating

- **Eating environment**
  - Access, salience, and convenience
  - Size and shape of serving containers
  - Atmospherics

- **Product**
  - Quality (sensory and nutritional properties)
  - Quantity (size and shape of packages and portions)

- **Marketing communication**
  - Advertising & promotion
  - Branding, nutrition and health claims

- **Actions of Food Marketers**
  - Conspicuous
  - Inconspicuous

- **Consumption response**
  - Automatic
  - Deliberate
2 - Human Self-illusion
Homo rationalis: the main fallacy of prevention

Warn ➔ protective behaviours
Educate ➔ handling of risk
Appeal ➔ moderation
Focus on the individual:
… who is free of impulses, desires and emotions, in control, objective and independent
We act intuitively, ... and “rationalise” afterwards

The Spirit Is Willing, But the Flesh is Weak: Why Young People Drink More Than Intended on Weekend Nights—An Event-Level Study

Florian Labhart, Kristen G. Anderson, and Emmanuel Kuntsche

Background: Heavy alcohol use is common among young adults on weekend nights and is assumed to be intentional. However, little is known about the extent to which heavy consumption is planned prior to the onset of drinking and what factors contribute to drinking more than intended. This study investigates drinking intentions at the beginning of an evening and individual and situational factors associated with a subsequent consumption over the course of multiple nights.

Methods: Using a smartphone application, 176 young people aged 16 to 25 (mean age = 19.1; 49% women) completed questionnaires on drinking intentions, consumption, and drinking environments before, during, and after multiple Friday and Saturday nights (n = 757). Multilevel regressions were used to investigate individual-level and night-level factors associated with previous drinking intentions and subsequent deviations from intentions.

Results: Participants intended to consume 2.5 drinks (SD = 2.8) per night yet consumed 3.8 drinks (SD = 3.9) on average. Drinking intentions were higher among those who frequently went out at night and engaged in more frequent predrinking. Participants drank more than intended on 361 nights (47.7%). For both genders, the number of drinks consumed before 8 PM, attending multiple locations, and being with larger groups of friends contributed to higher consumption than intended at the individual and the night levels. Heavier consumption than intended also occurred when drinking away from home for men and when going to nightclubs for women.

Conclusions: Making young adults aware of the tendency to drink more than intended, particularly when drinking begins early in the evening, moves from location to location, and includes large groups of friends, may be a fruitful prevention target. Structural measures, including responsible beverage service, may also help in preventing excessive drinking at multiple locations.
Unconscious environmental cues

Descriptive Norms – “everybody” does XY

Injunctive Norms – XY is OK and acceptable

Implicit Cognition – automatic processing of cues

‘young men think about four things, we brew one and sponsor two of them’
3) Limited Self-Control

We know what will make us happy, why do we watch TV instead?
Hot control versus cold control

Self Control
Is knowing you CAN ... BUT deciding you Won't
The concept

Environmental Prevention
- Environmental Regulatory Measures
- Environmental Economic Measures
- Environmental Physical Measures

Risk Behaviours and Wellbeing
- Alcohol, Tobacco, other Drugs
- Poor Diet
- Low Physical Activity
- Violence / Crime
- Mental Health
“Attitude follows behaviour”

The stories we used to hear ....

“Drinking as “Rite of passage”: a developmental task”

- drinking has lost its unquestioned symbolic power
- less pressure to drink and more room for competing activities
- From homogeneous drinking culture to the acceptance of differences.
- early maturation: more individualised, responsible, reflective, and adult-like actors than in earlier generations?

[Törrönnen et al 2018]
How to apply all this
European definition of environmental prevention

- interventions to limit exposure to unhealthy and risky behavioural opportunities and promote the availability of healthier opportunities.
- particularly important in those environments that contain triggers for risky behaviour.
- modifying the context where the behaviour takes place, such as alcohol retailers, public spaces or entertainment venues
- target familiar habits and behaviour
- do not have to rely on deliberate and conscious (healthier) choices.
- make the healthy choice the easiest option
Go beyond individuals’ decision making

- Reduce visibility, accessibility and perception of normality & acceptance

target the automatic system of behaviour (one that does not require deliberate cognition).

require lower individual ‘agency’: less need to deploy resources such as conscious decision-making, motivation and impulse control
Universal elements – at macro level

Regulate availability
Regulate taxes and prices
Limit publicity and promotion
Limit access for the under-aged
Limit opportunities for consumption; new habits:
  ✔ Tobacco: “outside only”
  ✔ Alcohol: “inside only”
  ✔ Cannabis: “only at home or in consumption rooms”
Measures against driving under the influence
Examples

**Regulatory**: Age restrictions, licensing hours, standardised plain packaging of tobacco products and the banning of alcohol sponsorship in sports. establishments to provide free drinking water as a condition for entertainment or alcohol retail licence.

**Physical**
micro-environment: special design of bars and nightclubs, beverage glasses: tall and thin with a lower total volume
macro-environment, such as city planning and landscape design, e.g. provision of free transport at night-time

**Economic**: taxes on tobacco products, minimum alcohol unit price, lowering the price of non-alcoholic drinks, free water in recreational venues
Op weg naar huis van de 'leisure club'. Maandag en woensdag kunnen de leerlingen 's avonds vrijwillig tussen half acht en tien uur naar ontmoeten. © Marlena Waldhauseen.

Hoe IJslandse tieners drank en sigaretten inruilden voor sport

Wat kan Nederland hiervan leren?

**ARTIKEL** Hoe IJslandse tieners de drank, wiet en sigaretten lieten staan en gingen sporten, en wat andere landen kunnen leren van dit succesverhaal.

Door: Ianthe Sahadat 2 juli 2017, 02:00
What is special?

Committed alcohol policy
Parental monitoring (+ family dinners)
Committed education and youth policy (keep them in school and in sports clubs): supervised leisure
Strong social norms
No investment in persuasion, awareness, warning campaigns, etc.
Divide the 1st grade class into heterogeneous teams. Exhibit a large poster with classroom rules. Reward entire teams for each child’s pro-social behavior, and don’t reward when a child is disruptive. It is “group contingent.”

Play for ten minutes, 3 times a week, extend that time over the year.

Make rewards more abstract
Designing drunkenness: How pubs, bars and nightclubs increase alcohol sales

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Using ethnographic data, this paper investigates the techniques used inside pubs, bars and nightclubs to manipulate and sustain alcohol consumption among patrons. Focus is on venues with the majority of patrons from the age group of approximately 15–35 years. The paper identifies a number of techniques, including: alcohol advertising; special offers (e.g. ‘Happy Hours’ and ‘all you can drink’ sets); display of strategic intimacy, flirtation, and encouragements to buy more; speed drinking devices (e.g. bongs and large pitchers); and architectural features that hamper moderate drinking (e.g. personalisation by young drinkers). These techniques were used most extensively in low-price venues and to lowest price 

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Rationale:
• reduce the activation of automatic processes
• reduce visibility, odour and convenience of consuming cannabis
→ less present, normal, acceptable or attractive
(= reduce descriptive & injunctive norms)
Purchase and use should be not be automatic, ubiquitous and easy
Stop this obsession with risk perception
Regulatory dimension

Operating hours restricted (day time)
Fines for consumption in public
No access nor consumption for minors
Product packaging and the design of outlets to be neutral, without appealing symbols
Only objective information on the essential parameters of the product. No “lifestyle advertisement”
Economic dimension

Fines for marketing with unproven health claims
Fines for misleading claims: CBD → “cannabis”
Fines for parents (curfew hours, possession)?
Minimum Unit Price per THC content?
Maximum THC content?
Registered-client cards
• avoid multiple purchases
• provide individualised feedback
Physical dimension (space, vision)

Minimal distance of sales outlets to
- shopping areas,
- schools

→ planning & agency required: buy on purpose, not *en passage*

No smoking in public

Ban the use/sale of products with image - word combinations that have implicit association with cannabis: “high”, “relax”, “C. Sativa leaves”
"Culture" is a construct, not a given reality. It is created by habits and interests (e.g. "cannabis culture")

Promoting individual decisions (and responsibility) is a fallacy (... and indecent).

If environments do not support our motivation, opportunities and incentives, our behaviour hardly changes