

WEBINAR OVERVIEW

Youth and alcohol: do new trends demand new solutions?

7 November 2023 | 13:00–14:00 CET

Background

Regional differences in alcohol consumption among youth

Alcohol consumption among young people (15–19-year-olds) carries significant health risks and no benefits (1-3). Drinking among young people may appear to have little change over the past two decades, globally (4). However, this trend masks substantial changes at the country and regional-level. For example, alcohol consumption among youth appears to be decreasing in the North America and Europe (5-7). Still, there is greater variability in trends in WHO South-East Asia, Africa and the Western Pacific regions, including areas of increasing youth consumption (8, 9).

Available country-level data demonstrates further nuances to global trends. For example, a recent national survey of young people in Nigeria found an increase in the prevalence of alcohol experimentation among Nigerian youth (34%) (10). This was reported up from 26% (11) and 30% (12) in earlier studies in Eastern and Southern Nigeria. Similar trends of increased consumption or no observable decline have also been reported in Brazil (13), India (14-16), and China (17).

Exploring causes of youth alcohol consumption trends by settings

The decline in youth alcohol consumption in many Western countries could be explained by new marketing practices that more aggressively target low- and middle-income countries, particularly in Africa, Asia and Latin America (8). Consequently, the settings where young people live, learn and play are at risk of becoming *alcoogenic environments*: settings where alcohol is easily accepted, available and affordable (13).

Physical, economic and social settings interact and influence the rise of alcoogenic environments (3). For example, evidence suggests that the *school setting* influences youth alcohol consumption, with studies reporting the presence of the alcohol industry in schools and industry practices to use deploy youth entrepreneurial training programmes (18-20).

The *online environment* is also a critical (digital) setting, with youth being among the most active on social media platforms. These platforms provide alcohol companies with new, cheaper ways to promote alcoholic beverages and other unhealthy commodities to young people (21, 22). Another youth setting relevant to alcohol consumption is the *home environment*, where the attitudes and practices of parents have been found to lead to earlier initiation of alcohol use and riskier drinking behaviours (13, 23).

Understanding the influence of these and other key settings on youth and alcohol consumption may hold further insights into current trends and ways in which they can be curbed to manage the risks of alcoogenic environments on young people.

About the webinar

This webinar sets out to explore trends related to changes in youth alcohol consumption globally according to the latest available data. Different hypotheses for these patterns will be tested, in an effort to understand the root causes of these trends by different key settings, including educational environments, online (digital) settings and the home environment. Different population-level policy interventions to influence alcoogenic environments will also be explored, building upon the dialogue initiated in the second edition of the Less Alcohol Webinar series on reducing exposure to alcoogenic environments (3).

What do we aim to achieve?

This webinar aims to explore:

- The global and regional trends for the consumption of alcohol among youth according to best available evidence;
- The influence of different critical settings on consumption patterns and practices; and
- The policy interventions have proven effective for reducing the exposure of youth to alcogenic environments.

Who should participate?

The target audience includes policy-makers, government officials and civil servants, civil society, researchers, local authorities and the public.

► Register here

Joining this event requires prior registration. If you have questions regarding how to request to attend, please contact the Less Alcohol Unit for more information: lessalcohol@who.int.

The event is co-organized by the Less Alcohol Unit of the Department of Health Promotion, the Alcohol, Drugs and Addictive Behaviours Unit and the Adolescent and Young Adult Health Unit at the World Health Organization.

References

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► About the Less Alcohol Webinar Series

The Less Alcohol Webinar Series sets out to start global conversations on contemporary policy issues critical to reducing alcohol consumption. The topics explored through the series intend to draw attention to perceived blind spots in the policy sphere. For an overview of the 2023 edition of the webinar series, visit [here](#) and register for upcoming webinars below.

Alcohol and the environment: how to green alcohol control policies?	Alcohol monopolies: what does it take for alcohol monopolies to work?	Youth and alcohol: do new trends demand new solutions?	Measuring alcohol policy implementation: are existing tools and methods fit for purpose?
18 September 2023 13–14:00 CET	18 October 2023 13–14:00 CET	7 November 2023 13–14:00 CET	7 December 2023 13–14:00 CET

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