

Experts call for action on the crippling socio-economic costs of alcohol

13 November 2015

Europe is the heaviest drinking region of the world, with consumption levels in some countries approximately twice the global average. Alcohol is the world's No. 1 risk factor for poor health and premature death among the 25-59 year age group, the core of the working age population.

Not only is [alcohol](#) a risk factor in over 60 types of diseases, with nearly 30 percent of deaths from gastro-intestinal diseases attributed to alcohol, but the burden of alcohol-related harm also has a significant impact on EU productivity. In fact, €74 billion in annual productivity losses are reported across the EU and as many as a quarter of staff in major companies are reported to have drinking problems.

The ripple effect of alcohol-related harm reaches all levels of society as well as future generations. It is estimated that 11 million people in the EU are dependent on alcohol, resulting in 9 million children and young people consequently living with at least one parent addicted to alcohol. Children living with families affected by alcohol also tend to have lower school attendance and worse health.

Gastroenterologists from United European Gastroenterology (UEG), in association with the European Alcohol Policy Alliance (Eurocare), The European Liver Patients Association (ELPA) and the European Association for the Study of the Liver (EASL), are supporting the Awareness Week on Alcohol Related Harm (16-20 November 2015) and calling for the prompt renewal of an EU Alcohol Strategy to reduce the crippling health burden and socio-economic costs attributed to alcohol consumption.

According to Professor Thierry Ponchon, Chair of the UEG Public Affairs Committee; "Due to the size of the problem and its universal impact, alcohol requires a focused approach and commitment for action from policy and decision makers at the European and national levels, particularly if we are

to meet Eurocare's recommended target for a minimum 10% reduction of total alcohol consumption in Europe by 2025."

UEG welcome Eurocare's focus on the development and implementation of health promotion policies and campaigns including those within the workplace and protecting children, helping to encourage a healthier and more productive workforce now and for future generations.

For more information on the Awareness Week on Alcohol Related Harm, please see www.awarh.eu

Provided by United European Gastroenterology

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