



Perspectives on responses to alcohol-related harm in the community

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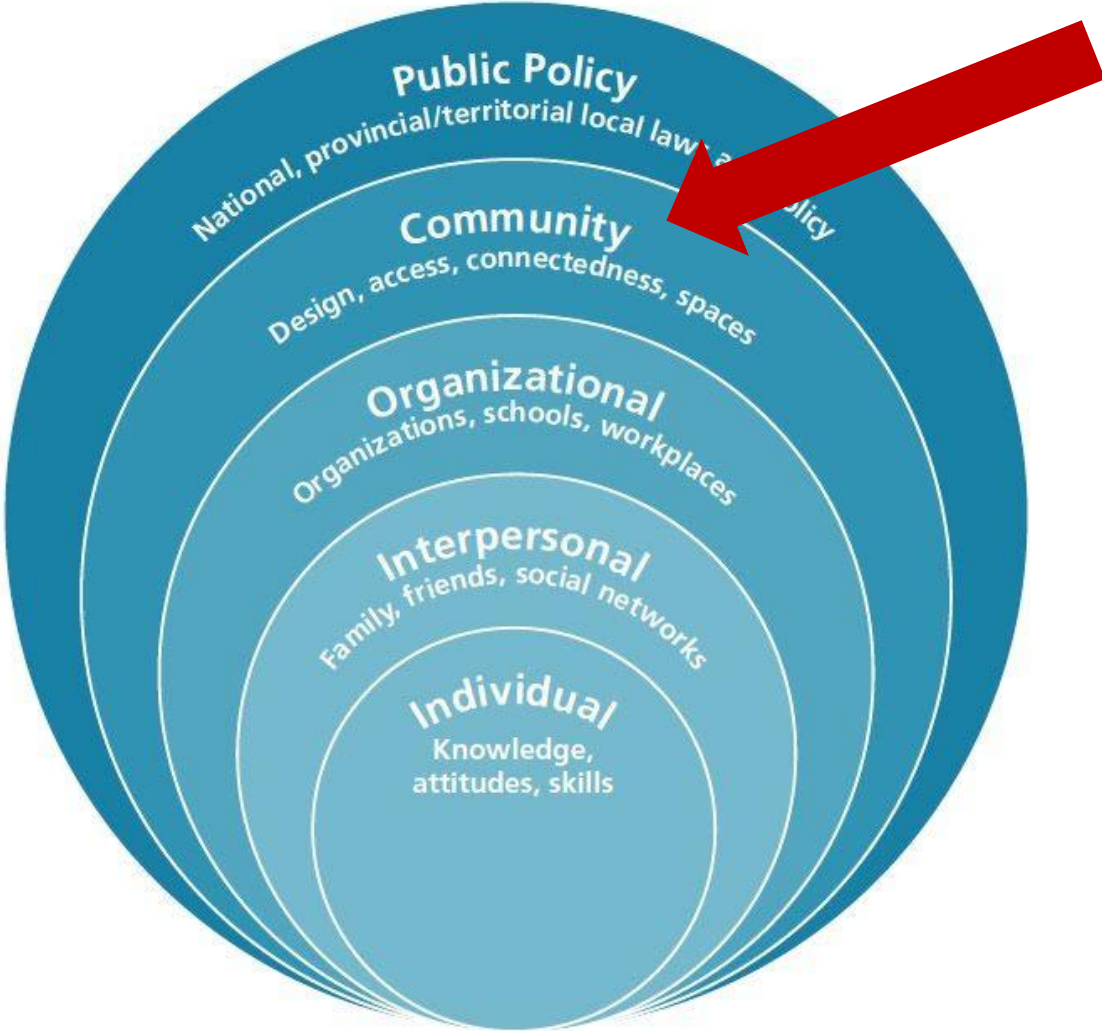
University College Cork, Ireland
Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh

Responses to alcohol-related harm in community

- Communities provide the systems and structures in which alcohol is consumed and harms occur (Holder, 2000)
- Therefore, **intervening** at the level of the **overall community system** may provide the greatest likelihood for initiating population-level changes in drinking behaviour and related harms (Midford, 2016)



Social ecological model of health



Research projects

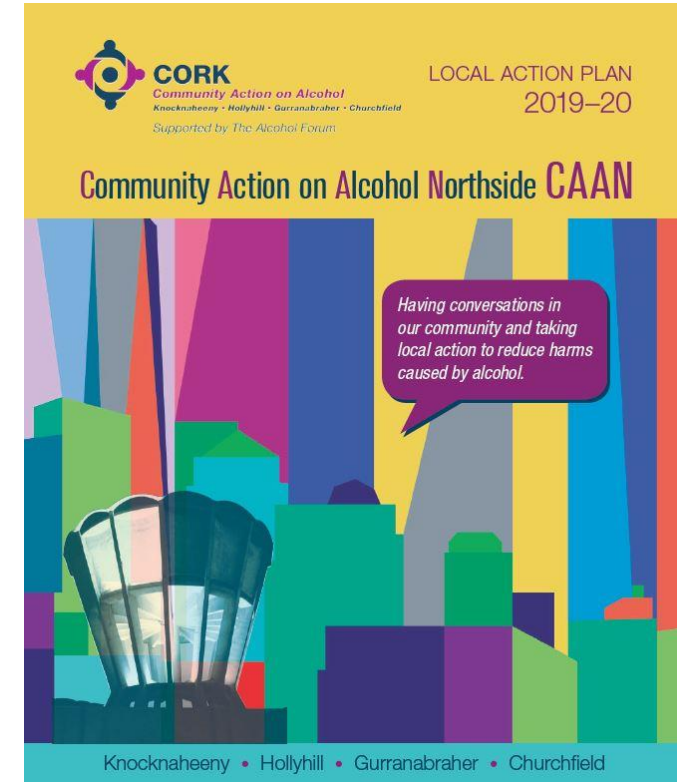
1. Research on a community **mobilisation** project in Cork-Kerry region
2. Results from a **representative household survey** on support for alcohol policy
3. A study on an alcohol prevention pilot project in **higher education sector** – REACT



Community Action on Alcohol Pilot Project

Community Action is a process for reaching out and creating partnerships in the community to **empower local communities**, organisations and groups to take action to enable change

- Aim: To reduce alcohol-related harm by supporting Drug and Alcohol Task Forces around the country to adopt a **community mobilisation** approach
- Piloted in three sites in Cork-Kerry region



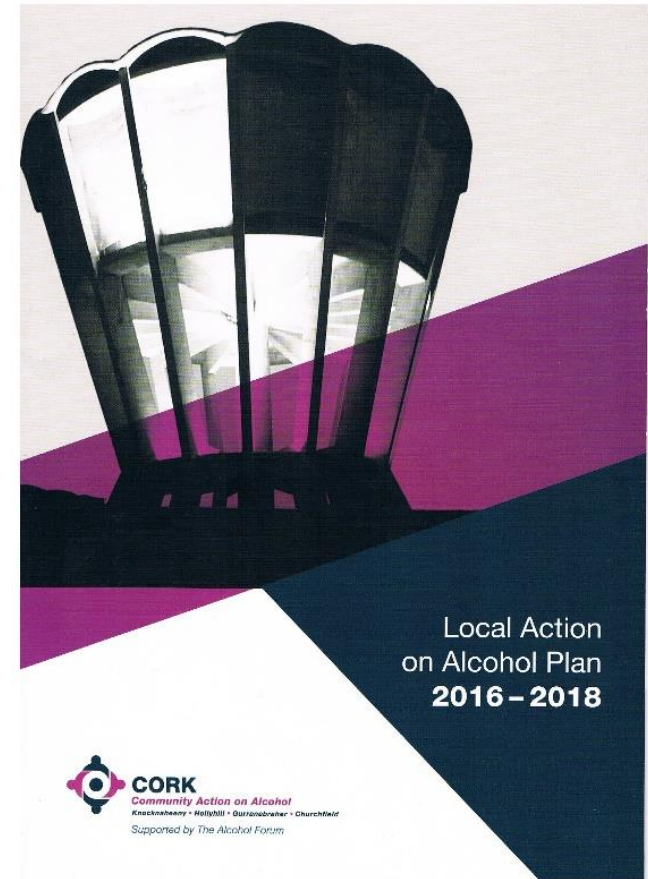
Community Action on Alcohol Pilot Project

Five main **pillars of action**:

- Education and prevention
- Supply, access and availability
- Screening, treatment and rehabilitation
- Research
- Monitoring and evaluation

As set out in the *Cork and Kerry Alcohol Strategy*

RESEARCH: Barriers/facilitators to implementation of CAAP through focus groups & interviews with steering groups in each site (July-Sept 2018)



What worked well



Alcohol-only focus

- Unanimous support for alcohol-only focus
- Inclusion of other substances 'water down' alcohol issue



Action plan format

- Provided structure & focus to the project
- Also, greater standardisation across three sites



Interest & commitment

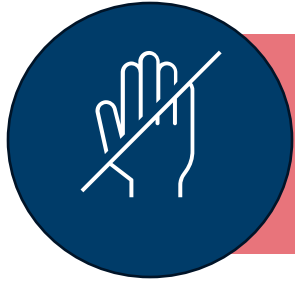
- Genuine interest in community-wide approach to alcohol
- Not just '*zoning in on teenagers*'



Opportunities for learning & training

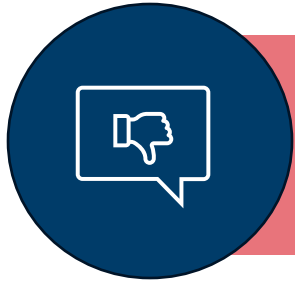
- Learning gained from working with professionals
- Induction training provided grounding & focus

Challenges



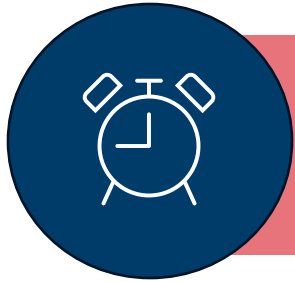
Resistance from local community to alcohol issue

- Alcohol perceived as a 'private' or 'young persons' issue
- Also, sense of an 'anti-alcohol agenda'



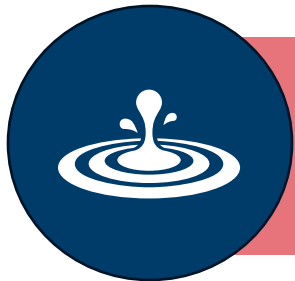
Lack of engagement by community groups or reps

- Poor engagement by schools, GAA, local politicians
- Also, poor turnout at some events, e.g. alcohol & cancer



Lack of resources to implement

- Time to commit + timeline of project (2 yrs) too short
- Need for more community reps + dedicated person



Perceived lack of impact

- Led to drop-out by some members of group
- Sense that community mobilisation had not worked

Key messages



Research study 2


European Journal of Public Health, 1–8

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<https://doi.org/10.1093/eurpub/ckad031>

Support for evidence-based alcohol policy in Ireland: results from a representative household survey

Susan Calnan  ¹, Seán R. Millar¹, Deirdre Mongan²

Methods

A representative household survey – data collection conducted in **July-August 2022** by **Ipsos MRBI**

In the three areas where Community Action on Alcohol Project (CAAP) is underway – Cork/Kerry

Quota-based sampling approach used to match population of the area (18+ years) in line with most recent census data



Participants

- **1,069 participants** took part in 2022 survey
- Comprising **51.6% women** and **48.4% men**



Key findings

ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION

- Levels of hazardous alcohol consumption remain high in the sample population
- Over half (51.8%) of respondents in hazardous drinking category (based on AUDIT-C scoring) similar to levels in 2016 survey (51.1%)
- Over one-third (35.4%) of the participants reported binge drinking on a monthly or more frequent (weekly or daily) basis



Key findings

AWARENESS & SUPPORT FOR ALCOHOL POLICY MEASURES

- Low levels of **awareness** of legislation/initiatives: over three-quarters (77.7%) of respondents had not heard of the Public Health (Alcohol) Act; 93% had not heard of the Community Action on Alcohol Pilot Project
- However, majority of respondents (>50%) showed **support** for the types of alcohol policy measures contained in Public Health (Alcohol) Act



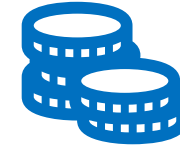
Key findings

SUPPORT FOR ALCOHOL POLICY MEASURES

- Support was strongest for a ban on alcohol advertising near schools and creches (85.1%) and for warning labels on alcohol products (81.9%)
- Support was lowest for a ban on price promotions (50.3%) and for minimum unit pricing (61.5%)
- Respondents with hazardous/harmful drinking significantly less likely to support measures than low-risk drinkers



Key messages



There is public support for regulation & policy measures contained in Public Health (Alcohol) Act

However, levels of support vary by type of policy, sociodemographic characteristics, alcohol consumption

For example, support for alcohol policy was lower among men and those with hazardous/harmful drinking patterns

Public support inversely associated with policy effectiveness, e.g. price-based policies often least popular

Study 3 – REACT pilot project

- An alcohol prevention programme piloted in universities in Ireland in 2016-2020
- Suite of evidence-based mandatory & optional action points for implementing universities and colleges
- Based on a **settings approach**, whereby strategic focus is on the whole community and population, policies and environment rather than solely individuals and problem behaviours

Davoren et al. *BMC Health Services Research* (2018) 18:344
https://doi.org/10.1186/s12913-018-3173-z

BMC Health Services Research

STUDY PROTOCOL Open Access

Responding to excessive alcohol consumption in third-level (REACT): a study protocol

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Abstract


Background: Problem alcohol use is an ongoing, worldwide phenomenon of considerable concern. Throughout the past 20 years, national policies have noted the importance of students when tackling alcohol consumption. Considering alcohol is a multifaceted issue, a multi-component response is required to combat its excessive use. This protocol sets out the approach used for developing, implementing and evaluating the REACT (Responding to Excessive Alcohol Consumption in Third-level) Programme.

Methods/design: This evaluation will provide the evidence base for programme development, implementation and improvement. Stage one involved defining the multi-component intervention. This was developed following a systematic review of existing literature and a Delphi-consensus workshop involving university students, staff and relevant stakeholders. Following this, the programme is being implemented across the Higher Education sector in Ireland. A number of Higher Education Institutes have declined the invitation to participate in the programme. These institutions will act as control sites. Each intervention site will have a steering committee whose membership will include a mix of students and academic and student service staff. This steering committee will report to the REACT research team on the implementation of mandatory and optional action points at local sites. An online cross-sectional study at baseline and two years post intervention will be utilised to determine the impact of the REACT programme. The impact assessment will focus on (1) whether the intervention has reduced alcohol consumption among third-level students (2) whether the programme altered students' attitudes toward alcohol and (3) whether the programme has decreased the second-hand effects associated with excessive consumption. Finally, qualitative research will focus on factors influencing the take-up and implementation of the programme as well as students' views on the initiative.

Discussion: Alcohol consumption has remained on the policy agenda at both national and international level over recent decades. Students are regularly among the highest alcohol consumers, yet university management and public policymakers struggle to tackle this burgeoning issue. The REACT Programme provides a structure to translate policy into practice for those seeking to reduce hazardous alcohol consumption and related harms among third-level students.

Keywords: Students, Alcohol, Intervention, University, Ireland, Multi-component, Complex

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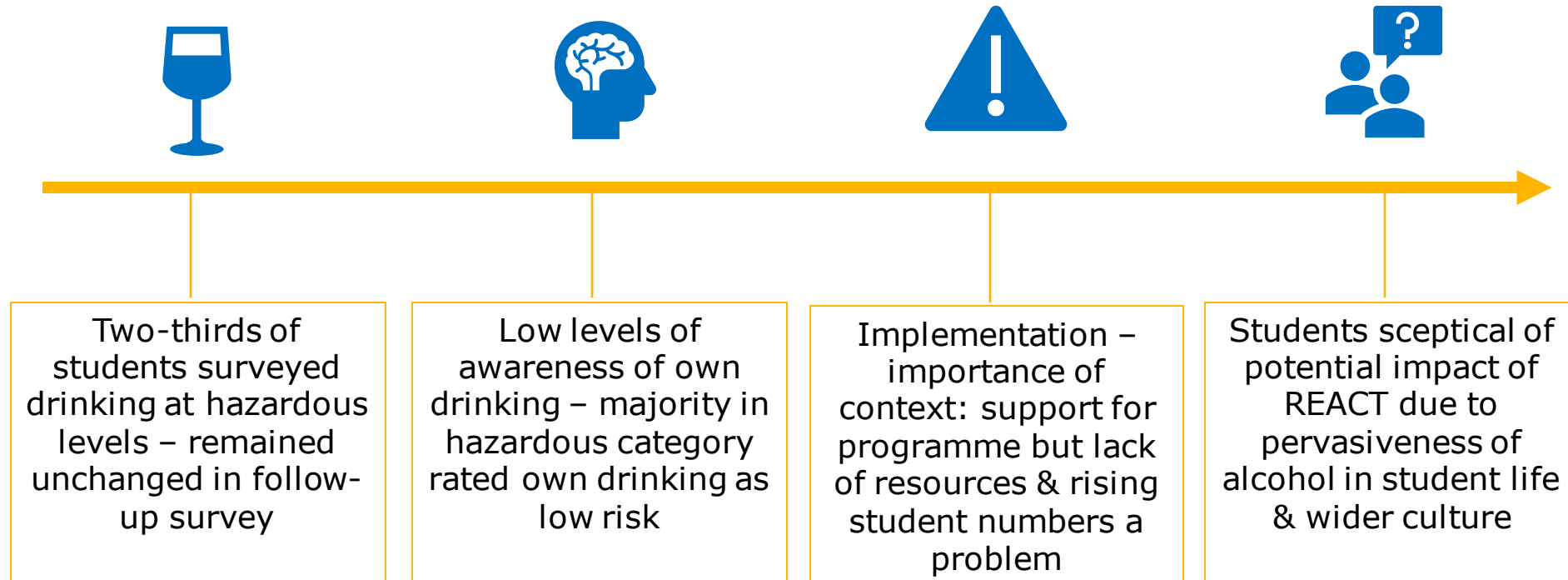
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REACT
Responding to Excessive Alcohol Consumption in Third-Level

Research on REACT



Key messages



Closing remarks...

- As Holder (2002) highlights, there are ‘compelling reasons’ to adopt a community-wide approach to reducing alcohol-related harms
- However, community mobilisation takes time & requires proper resourcing – but also greater understanding of public perceptions of alcohol & how to challenge cultural norms
- Need for a multidisciplinary approach – including e.g. social scientists, political scientists as well as health researchers
- Also, it is encouraging to see public support for alcohol policies in findings – opportunities to leverage this support to help sustain political commitment to alcohol prevention



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Alcohol conference:
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