

Thank you for the invitation to comment / submit suggestions re the above inquiry.

I am a Dr. of biochemistry with extensive experience in the alcohol / drug rehab field.

www.05.com.au is an accredited provider for the Drink Drive Rehab Program under state DHS (92/003).

For further info and background, please visit www.05.com.au and / or www.ahev.com.

Our suggested areas for government committee investigation and / or proposed regulations are as follows:

1. Increase the age of alcohol consumption to 21 (as is the case in USA), particularly in the consumption of spirits.
2. Regulate advertising for the alcohol industry.
3. Provide guidelines for the alcohol industry in terms of packaging as is the case for the tobacco industry. Whilst alcohol and nicotine are very different drugs in that alcohol, unlike cigarettes, could be taken in moderation, there is a need to educate the public about the harmful effects of excessive use of alcohol. Accordingly, alcohol industry needs to claim responsibility for the misuse of its product and provide "manufacturer's guidelines and safe use of its product".
4. Government must educate the public of the advantages and disadvantages of alcohol use in a balanced approach / advertising campaign. The menace to our young in today's society, despite increase of use of recreational drugs, remains alcohol.
5. Legal consumption of drugs such as alcohol and tobacco has shown that it has failed in prohibiting / reducing harmful impact of this drug on all aspects of Australian life. Whilst use of illegal substances remains despite its criminality, the fact that it remains illegal has reduced accessibility by majority of Australians particularly our young people. This argument could be used to bring back regulation of licit drugs as means to reduce harm as decriminalization argument has obviously failed in its merit. It is clear that it is the legal drugs that create the biggest menace in our society NOT the illicit ones. Accordingly, smoking (legal habit) remains the biggest killer drug in Australia and the world whilst heroine (illicit drug), in absolute percentage terms, remains the least harmful in our society / world.
6. It is our belief in this organization that binge drinking is the single most important issue in our young generation. I believe that we are producing increasingly a generation of brain damaged future adults, to drugs hindered with blackouts and biochemical damage. WE MUST STOP THE CULTURAL MACHOISM / IMAGE / ICON WHICH ALLOWS OUR YOUNG TO SHOW OFF THEIR BINGE DRINKING HABITS.
7. It is important to make a distinction between addiction to drugs and moral judgement on those patients afflicted by such illness. Whilst responsibility is always

that of the individual, we need to reduce the stigma associated with such diseases allowing those affected to seek help without fear of reprisals or recrimination.

8. It is similarly crucial to make a connection between drug addiction to heroin (for example) and another legally available drug such as alcohol. This could be supported by evidence in the medical literature showing that medication used to address craving for heroin is the same used to treat alcohol addiction (Naltrexone). The purpose of such awareness campaign is to allow those in our society who enable alcohol users to use their substance whilst frowning on heroin because of its lack of acceptance, to equalize the harmful effects of those two drugs regarding both with equal caution.

Finally, due to the lack of notice in provision of submission, the above has been a brief overview towards the areas that are in desperate need to be addressed according to this writer's agenda.

Please do not hesitate to contact me for any queries.

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