

Recommendations from UEG on the Irish Public Health (Alcohol) Bill

United European Gastroenterology (UEG) is a professional medical association combining scientific European societies concerned with digestive health. In addition to promoting high-quality clinical care, scientific research and training, UEG also aims to increase awareness of gastrointestinal diseases amongst the greater public and decision-makers.

The provisions taken within the Irish Public Health (Alcohol) Bill (health warnings on labels, minimum unit pricing and stricter regulation on the advertisement of alcohol) are necessary to tackle the issue of alcohol related harm and to prevent onset of many digestive diseases. Alcohol consumption is a risk factor in over 60 types of diseases, with nearly one quarter of all deaths from gastrointestinal diseases – including liver cirrhosis, pancreatitis and digestive cancers – directly attributed to alcohol. In 2017, UEG released a [report](#) that highlights the indisputable link between alcohol and several forms of digestive cancers – oesophageal, liver, pancreatic, colorectal and gastric cancers.

According to our experts, the risk of cancer incidence rises exponentially with the amount of alcohol consumed. Drinking 3 times the recommended amount increases the risk of oesophageal cancer by 8. Alcohol accounts for up to half of all liver cancer cases in Europe, and even moderate alcohol consumption increases risk for oesophageal and colorectal cancer in particular.

The survival rates for pancreatic cancer are alarmingly low, at 3-6%, and the median survival rate after diagnosis is just 4.6 months. Incidence of this kind of cancer are growing, and according to our experts, this is directly linked to alcohol misuse.

We are in support of the progressive proposal for alcohol labels to carry information alerting consumers to the cancer link proposed by the Irish Public Health (Alcohol) Bill. UEG is in support of this as it is a rational and responsible response to a growing health problem and we are in favour of restrictions on alcohol advertising and marketing, especially where children are concerned, and mandatory labeling. The adoption of the Irish Public Health Bill would be a positive move in the right direction to improve public health and reduce incidences of digestive cancer.

References:

Alcohol and Digestive Cancers Across Europe: Time for Change

<https://www.ueg.eu/publications/alcohol-and-digestive-cancers-report/>

Digestive Health Across Europe: Issues, challenges and inequalities

https://www.ueg.eu/epaper/UEG_DigestiveHealthAcrossEurope/index.html#0