ChaMPs Alcohol Insight

Qualitative Research De-Brief

April 2009

CorporateCulture
Purpose

Share **insights from qualitative research** into hazardous and harmful alcohol consumption among males within **“Ties of Community”** segment.

Consider **potential interventions** that may be developed across the network.
What we’ll cover

- Background and approach
- Lifestyles, attitudes and behaviour
- Understanding units and impact
- Motivations, benefits and barriers
- Influencing behaviour
- Summary and recommendations
Background and approach
Background

- ChaMPS is working to reduce alcohol related harm across the sub region
- NWPHO segmentation identified heavy male drinkers within Mosaic groups known as Ties of Community as a key priority
- These are found among the most traditional, working class areas and are represented in specific parts of Wirral, St Helens, Crewe and Sefton
- In-depth qualitative research with those at risk was commissioned to provide insights to help reduce levels of alcohol related harm in this target group
Our approach

Social marketing

- A mix of competencies to deliver change
- Collaborative actions
- The use of a mix of strategies
- Theory-based
- The use of products or services to make it easy to act
- The engagement of “customers” in creation and delivery
- A focus on social goals
- Deep insight into people’s beliefs and lifestyles
- A focus on segmentation
- A focus on behaviour change
- An understanding of barriers to action
- An understanding of competitive behaviours

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Research Objectives

- To explore lifestyles, attitudes and behaviour relating to alcohol
- To understand personal motivations, influences and barriers underlying drinking behaviour
- To understand drinking habits, including:
  - What role do pubs play in these communities?
  - How does this differ for men and women?
  - What are their drinking routines like?
  - Why are off sales at the pub more common for this group?
- To explore understanding of links between alcohol and health/social problems and related harm
- To identify the levers for how drinking behaviour of these target groups could be positively influenced and changed
## Sample & Methodology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Bootle</th>
<th>Crewe</th>
<th>St.Helens</th>
<th>Wirral</th>
<th>Volume drunk by main respondents</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Individual Interviews</strong></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8 heavy 5 medium 3 light</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Friendship Pairs</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4 heavy 2 medium 2 light</td>
<td>4 pairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Couple Interviews</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>4 pairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Landlord/tenants</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals for interviews</strong></td>
<td>7 interviews 9 people</td>
<td>7 interviews 9 people</td>
<td>7 interviews 9 people</td>
<td>7 interviews 9 people</td>
<td>12 heavy 7 medium 5 light</td>
<td>28 interviews 36 people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>In-pub</strong></td>
<td>Observation</td>
<td>Observation</td>
<td>Observation</td>
<td>Observation</td>
<td>4 observations 18 short interviews</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sample Details

- Age groups: 50% 35-44s, 50% 45-54s
- Marital status: 50% single including separated, 50% married
- Frequency: all drank at least two days a week
- Volume:
  - Heavy = 50 units + a week
  - Medium = 22-49 units
  - Light = drink but less than 21 units per week
- Demographic segment: C2DE
Methodology designed to explore what respondents think, believe, feel, do related to alcohol
Projective techniques

Asking respondents to articulate what they feel and believe about drinking through storyboards

- Respondents fill in frames to create a **storyboard of** a typical day/night that involves alcohol.
- Feature all of the pivotal moments that result in a **good day or bad day**
- Enable us to listen out for **potential triggers** rather than imposing them on respondents.
Drink diaries

Enable respondents to explore differences between what they say and do through drink diaries

### My week – a drink-by-drink diary

For each day of the week you have a drink, try to make a note of where you were, roughly what time it was, who you were drinking with, and how many of each type of drink you had. Draw a circle around each answer, and circle as many different drinks as required. Remember to bring this sheet to your interview.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Where, and at what time, did you have a drink today?</th>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
<th>Saturday</th>
<th>Sunday</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social event</td>
<td>Pub</td>
<td>Home</td>
<td>Pub</td>
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<td>Pub</td>
<td>Home</td>
<td>Pub</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who did you have a drink with?</th>
<th>Friends</th>
<th>Family/partner</th>
<th>Friends</th>
<th>Family/partner</th>
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<th>Family/partner</th>
<th>Friends</th>
<th>Family/partner</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>On my own</td>
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<td>Other</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What did you have to drink today?</th>
<th>Beer</th>
<th>Wine</th>
<th>Beer</th>
<th>Wine</th>
<th>Beer</th>
<th>Wine</th>
<th>Beer</th>
<th>Wine</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spirits</td>
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<td>Other</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How much did you have to drink?</th>
<th>Glasses</th>
<th>Pints</th>
<th>Glasses</th>
<th>Pints</th>
<th>Glasses</th>
<th>Pints</th>
<th>Glasses</th>
<th>Pints</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bottles</td>
<td></td>
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Lifestyles, attitudes and drinking behaviour
The Backdrop

- Research conducted in “recovering” areas
- Employment has been patchy in recent times
- Some have been used to intermittent employment (working away, shift work, contract labouring jobs)
- Signs of the recession beginning to bite
- They have less money
- General feeling of uncertainty and worry
The changing world of pubs

- Previous abundance of local pubs - many recently closed down (can’t compete with Wetherspoons breakfast and a pint for £2)
- Smoking ban has hit hard and increased drinking at home
- Less people drink in their local and pubs are very reliant on regulars
- Many pubs struggling to survive and others are working hard to attract new customers with tactics such as food, SKY sports, darts/pool teams, events (mediums)
- In the evening, pubs can become the preserve of the youth and unappealing for older men

A cycle of drinking in the daytime and then a return home to carry on drinking alone is often produced
In-pub observations ...

- Different “shifts” of customers across the day, varying by pub
  - Morning gatherings – 10 till 1- not necessarily all day drinkers and drift away at lunchtime
  - Drifters in the afternoons, probably nowhere else to go
  - Evenings may be the busiest times for some pubs, but others close through lack of customers
- Most of the time, people look happy, comfortable, content
  - A world they felt at home in; an alternative home
  - Lots of territorialism – our table, our area
- Regulars get to know the management and staff – being known is important
- Heavy drinkers find each other, become known and some socialise but others keep apart,
Why drink?

- **Habit and habitat**
  - Started young with mates or dad and kept going
  - Drinking culturally embedded in these communities

- **Drinking as basis for socialising**
  - This is the key reason for going to pubs, therefore a key reason for drinking

- **Peer pressure**
  - Wanting/being forced to join in

- **World of work**
  - Joining in – reward at the end of the day
  - Working away from home – nothing else to do but watch TV or drink

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"I drink because it’s a social thing. It’s a working man’s pub. Not your posh one. People who lay gas pipes, work in Cammell Lairds. A very working man type pub. Not the cleanest and hardly any women. But you can have a crack with them. The jokes, they’re funny. It’s just a general unwind at the end of the day.” (Heavy, Birkenhead)

"Part of it is the male macho thing. They’ve said things to me like ‘You’re not a real man. I can drink all night’..... I always get comments like lightweight or water boy” (Light, Bootle)

"It’s the thing to do. I’d finish work. I’d go to the pub for a game of cards. I worked with a gang of lads and everyone did it, it was the natural thing to do.” (Heavy, St Helens)
Why drink?

● **Functional**
  - Unwinding, stress relief for some, drink is identified as a daily ritual to put the cares of the day behind them
  - Reward for coping with stressful jobs
  - Sleep management e.g. coping with shift patterns
  - “Knocking the edge off”

● **Filling the time/relief from boredom**
  - What else is there to do?

● **Like drink?**
  - Surprisingly few mention the taste
  - Very few say they specifically want to get drunk or intend to when going out

“I do class having a drink as a reward to myself as I do have a really stressful job” (Medium, Crewe)

“Going back twenty years I was having a terrible time sleeping. I started drinking four cans and that lasted a year. It put me to sleep. It did work and after a while I cut back. We’d had an awful lot of bad jobs with children and the dead bodies get to you. It was better than drugs (prescribed) and it worked” (ex-fireman, now medium)

“If I am on lates (i.e. shifts), I’ll have a drink to wind down. If I am on nights I don’t drink till the weekend. If I didn’t have a drink when I am on lates I reckon I’d be wide awake especially with work in the nights.” (Medium, Crewe)
Why pubs? Why so often?

- **Socialising** – over-riding driver
- Nature of friendship environments varied
- We found some well organised, habitual structures such as:
  - “Our table” – where network congregate
  - Extended family table for morning drinking session
  - Regular threesome drink after work – whoever is first gets first round in
- Others more ad-hoc
  - Arrange to go out with friends now and again. Pubs vary. May be a circuit
- **Escape - to get out of the house:**
  - Away from family or wife/partner
  - Nobody there, lonely/isolated, split from partner

““Being part of the scene. Being there with me mates. Drinking what they are drinking”” (Medium, actually heavy currently, St. Helens)

““It’s boredom. I am on my own (divorced). I won’t drink at home. You get out to meet your friends”” (Heavy, St Helens)

““If I am on my own, and it’s a bad day, my brain’s playing tricks with me, blowing up every minor trouble”” (Heavy, Bootle)

““You want a pub environment because it’s more relaxing. You can have a chat. If you stay in, you don’t half get miserable if you’ve got worries. It’s dead depressing”” (Light, Bootle)
## Lifetime trajectories - defining moments

| Typical Life (1) | Begin drinking in mid-teens with mates, dad – a rite of passage  
|                 | Heaviest drinking in twenties, pre-responsibilities  
|                 | Settle down and cut back on drinking – pub becomes treat |
| Typical Life (2) | Begin drinking in mid-teens with mates, dad – rite of passage  
|                 | Heaviest drinking in twenties, pre-responsibilities  
|                 | Settle down and DON’T cut back – pub stays focus |
| Typical Life, Interrupted | Begin drinking in mid-teens with mates, dad  
|                         | Heaviest drinking in twenties, pre-responsibilities  
|                         | May attempt to settle down but events, tragedies affect them: deaths, divorces, unemployment  
|                         | Triggers a return to heavy drinking |
| Atypical Life | Problems from childhood  
|               | Abusive or problematic parents. Crime, Violence.  
|               | Drinking from early age becomes a habitual norm |
### Lifetime trajectories - defining moments.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Typical Life (1)</strong></th>
<th>‘I have got more responsibilities in life now. Wife, kids, job. When I lived at home, when I was younger, I had no responsibilities’. (Light, Crewe)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Typical Life (2)</strong></td>
<td>‘I’d be about fifteen and I’d go to the pub with me dad and he’d get me a bitter shandy and I’d think this is great. Then me mates started going to the pub when we were about sixteen and it just carried on. Basically it’s just a social thing. I come out to socialise’ (Heavy, Bootle)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Typical Life, Interrupted</strong></td>
<td>‘The peak of my drinking was six years ago when I had just got divorced. My ex-wife had a bad menopause and it became too difficult and unbearable. I’d go out every night and have three or four pints and then six or seven at the weekends with shorts….after she left there was no need to go out. I was only looking for a comfort zone not the drink’ (Medium, Crewe)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Atypical Life</strong></td>
<td>‘Six months old. My mum gave me glasses of sherry to shut me up…then at fifteen I stared partying. The last year me missus left me, I lived with me mate and we were drinking twenty four cans a night, or twelve cans and a bottle of vodka. But I’m back with the missus. We’ve got a new baby. I’ve built myself a shed with a leather armchair and a telly. I won’t smoke or drink in front of the kids. So at night I’ll sit and watch the telly, have a smoke and just a couple of bottles’ (Heavy, Crewe)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Relationships between men and women play a key role

- The relationship between men and women is related to their drinking behaviour
  - Getting involved and settling down can curtail excess
  - Bad relationship causes “flight to pub”
  - No women/partners in life leads to need to socialise in pub
- Attitudes of women leads to different levels of “permission”
  - Discouraged/not allowed
  - Encouraged to go for short time
  - Allowed to go as long as like
- Attitude of men towards women/families is also crucial
  - How much time do they want to spend with them versus their “mates”?
  - How much could they get away with or should they try to get away with?

“It’s difficult to change. The people I see in the pubs who drink a little too much are in a dodgy relationship or single. It seems to be a thing for men without women” (Medium, Birkenhead)

“I know for a fact she wouldn’t stop me doing it. She’s not made that way. She’s one of the old school. She knows that if you go out and earn a crust you are entitled to a pint”
Relationships between men and women play a key role

- Interactions between each others’ drinking were reported
  - If men were with a woman who was heavy drinker, this increases the male’s drinking
  - Attempts at reform: in some cases, the women had got to know the men in middle age, after the men had been very heavy drinkers - women had tried to get the men to cut back, and to some extent succeeded
- Women often saw stress, personal and societal, as key to drinking nowadays
- Sometimes women saw pub usage as “good” for the men, it helped them unwind, socialise (or at least, that’s what the men said)

“My first wife never drank. The second wife went OTT on the drink. She’s actually been in a rehab clinic twice to sort her out. When we were together she was drinking heavily. She could drink a bottle of vodka a day as well as any amount of lager as well. When she was drinking like that, when I came home from work she’d do my head in. She’d never shut up and she’d tell you about the same thing twenty million times. So by that time I’d had enough. So I’d go straight to the fridge and start drinking again. Her drinking drove me to drinking” (Heavy, Bootle)

“Life is stressful. No-one is smiling. You can’t do this, you can’t do that, don’t eat this, don’t eat that. Everything you see on the telly is negative. And now this unit thing is another downer” (Heavy, St Helens)
Men and Women: 
One couple’s conceptions of a ‘Good Day’ involving alcohol

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Woman</th>
<th>Man</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The weekend</td>
<td>Football match</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chilling</td>
<td>Friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunny day</td>
<td>A couple of beers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the garden</td>
<td>The pub</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barbeque</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definitely a family day</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After comparing their “good days”, she sounded disappointed.

He added in quickly, “barbeque”, “garden”

Light drinker (nowadays) Crewe
Why are some light, others medium, others heavy drinkers?

- **Life circumstances and responsibilities**
  - Response to jobs
  - Response to families (including doing things together or not)
  - Response to critical life events
  - Relative importance of pub versus other interests

- **Personal choice/ priorities/perceived acceptability**
  - Choose to drink that much.
  - Relative importance versus other aspects of life
  - Drink in accordance with their own view of appropriateness

- **In/Capacity: some can drink more than others**
  - Reason that some men drink less – they cannot drink more
  - Linked to personal sense of “when had enough”
  - Linked to pride/machismo

- **Hard manual labour: basic urge to re-hydrate**
Why are some light, others medium, others heavy?

“When I was working away I was in a crowd and we’d go to a pub rather than a hotel room...when I was a shop-fitter I was probably a heavy drinker, ten pints a night. We’d call it the ‘black crash’ We’d go straight to the pub from work, then go get washed, changed then go out again.”

(Light, Crewe)

“My job is really heavy going. You have to rake a hundred tonnes of asphalt. The material is very hot and you sweat a lot. You drink gallons a day. Drink lots of Coke and water. Once you are in the van coming home, you’re thirsty. A bottle of water wouldn’t do it. You need a nice pint. The first half just rinses the dust out.”

(Heavy, Bootle)

“They are trying to keep hold of their youth. To keep hold of their mates. It’s just custom. They’ve done this since leaving school. For me it was when I started piece work I got out of the routine of going out”

(Light, St Helens - swapped from being ten pints a night chef to working in furniture factory where you were paid by amount of work produced).

“I started drinking when I was sixteen or seventeen, snakebites in them days. But I eased off when I had the kids. I can kind of take it or leave it. I had to pay off a big tax bill of thirty five thousand pounds but I have near enough paid it and my mortgage is nearly at an end. That’s kept me in a bit, and curtailed a lot of hobbies. I’ve had to grow up a bit.”

(Medium, Birkenhead)
Why are some light, others medium, others heavy…others super heavy?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Light</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>Heavy</th>
<th>Super-Heavy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| ● Lower capacity  
● Fear effects e.g. hangovers on work.  
● Family responsibilities  
● Interests, hobbies, sports.  
● Not pub orientated.  
● Beer/wine | ● Big capacity  
● Some fear effects e.g. hangovers on work.  
● Family responsibilities  
● Stress at work – foreman level  
● Interests, hobbies, sports.  
● Mix of pub and home drinking  
● Beer/wine  
● Often when diary analysed, actually drink more than thought | ● Big capacity  
● Not concerned about effects  
● Family looks after itself  
● Pub is focus of social life  
● Few interests beyond pub – just football rugby on TV.  
● Beer | ● Huge capacity  
● No responsibilities:  
  — Work  
  — Family  
  — Self  
● Not pub orientated  
● Vodka |
Encounters with “super-heavies”

- Not specifically intended as part of sample, but met/interviewed as friends or in pub (although some not regular pub goers in general)
- Air of menace in contrast to bonhomie of most respondents
- Prefer drinking at home
  - Cheaper to do so
  - Less chance of trouble
- Drank different things to other men interviewed
  - Vodka, cider, super-strength lager
- Drugs seemed to be involved
- Broken families
- Not working, not for years
- May have tried clinics, counselling
  - Failed, but perhaps because did not want it to succeed
Understanding of units and impact
The diaries showed a mismatch between perception and reality – what people say and do.
Units – little awareness of weekly consumption

- Diary entries
  - 24 completed
  - Units
    - 48 - 18
    - 38 - 30
    - 104 - 68
    - 66 - 48
    - 40 - 34
    - 32 - 64
    - 38 - 34
    - 22 - 22
    - 38 - 62
    - 60
    - 32 - 52
    - 36 - 176
    - 62

shocking super heavy
Units – Under-estimation

- We recruited a sample biased towards heavy drinkers but including light and medium to help understanding
- In general, we found that after working through diaries, there was often considerable under-estimation
- Why?
  - Difficulty of assessment: wine/cans/bottles
  - Premium strength
  - Memory, they forget
  - Arithmetic, they aren’t used to adding up
  - Denial, they might deny denial but it seemed to us a factor
  - Special occasions, untypical weeks – seem to happen quite often!

“I wouldn’t have known if you hadn’t totalled it all up. I don’t take a great deal of notice. It’s only when I wake up dog tired rough that I think I’ve had too much...But I don’t consider a couple of pints a night too much”. INTERVIEWER EXPLAINS UNITS

“Well that’s a bit scary. But I don’t know how I could drink less. It’s nothing, two or three pints every night. It’s passing the time away” (Heavy, Birkenhead)
Units – a lack of understanding

- **Patchy knowledge**
  - Most had heard of units, some vaguely, others more specifically
  - Perhaps some deliberate denial/refusal to learn
  - Equality of units not necessarily believed. Spirits worse than beer

- **Drinking in pubs**
  - Mostly drank beer, most had idea that a pint = two units
  - But many under-rated strong lager (including Stella – drunk by quite a few)
  - Most had rough or good idea of number of pints consumed
  - But did not calculate the units

“I know of it but I try to plead ignorance of it. I know I drink too much.” (Medium, St Helens)
Units – self regulation

- **Drinking at Home**
  - Harder to assess units
  - Clear from the diary analysis and discussion that they underestimate units
  - Cans = ? Not a pint or a half, varying strengths
  - Wine drinking at home – confusion
  - There are issues with alcohol by volumes and glass sizes

- There was limited spirit drinking in our sample, perhaps false reassurance of full bottles of gifted whisky etc untouched in their cupboards at home
Units – Credibility

- Tend to think recommended maximum intake of 21 units is unrealistic
- Compounded by some believing 14 units is the limit

“The doctor says you are only to have so many units but that’s rubbish because it would mean everybody is an alcoholic....two units in that pint? Well then we are all alcoholics. There’s not many going to stick to what the doctors say. And there’s worse ones than me anyway.” (Heavy, Crewe)
Health – ‘Not me’

- “It’s probably bad but”….
- Main awareness is of liver disease - cirrhosis
  - Associated with “alcoholics”
  - George Best/Oliver Reed
  - Park Bench/Bad lifestyles (drinking bad stuff, not eating, living rough)
  - “Not me”
- Knowledge of other health problems less established, more diffuse
  - Mentions of kidney, weight, blood pressure, weight gain
- Some individuals had health issues but tended not to see them as “problems”, i.e. gout, arthritis etc

“I don’t feel any detriment to my health with the amount of alcohol I drink and there’s people I have met in the pub who drink a damn sight more than me and for a damn sight longer and there’s nowt wrong with their health”.
(Heavy, Birkenhead)
Health – making excuses

- **Clouding the issue:**
  - Some alcohol is good for you
  - Doctors drink a lot
  - “My dad/auntie drank every day and lived to be 93” syndrome
  - Sense also that drinkers latch onto confusion around health issues/benefits as justification

- **Smoking versus Drinking**
  - Clear message: give up because smoking causes lung cancer which kills
  - They don’t see an equivalent distinction between “alcoholics” and “other drinkers”

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““Heart disease is difficult because in another study they say a glass of wine is good for your heart. It’s a difficult balance. I don’t know any teetotallers who live longer than those who have a few drinks” (Medium, Birkenhead)

“I’ve got the early signs of arthritis and maybe that was caused by drink. But on the other hand they say red wine might be good for your health and sorting out your circulation which is related to arthritis. Well that’s what I have read….it’s difficult because ale isn’t good, but then wine is good for us. Is it good or bad? It’s a grey area”. (Light, ex heavy, Crewe)
Other alcohol related problems

- **Drink driving**
  - Encountered men who had been banned 4 times, served prison terms.
  - Encountered everyday over limits drinkers.

- **Hangovers**
  - Feeling terrible next day, feeling waste of day.

- **Work performance**
  - Can be affected. Concerning to some.
  - But also stories of people seemingly unaffected.

- **Letting people down/not keeping promises**

- **Doing stupid/ill-advised things**

  “I have done some really stupid things. I once poured Sambuca in my eye. It stung like a bitch but it did the job, it paralysed me. I always wanted to try it. It goes straight into the blood system. I’d had a few like before I did it. But it does the job” (Heavy, Crewe)
Other impacts

- **Violent disorders**
  - Given age of respondents very few now directly involved with violence
  - Believe violence mainly associated with the young, binge drinkers, drugs (cocaine), young women
  - But past encounters, knowledge of pubs to avoid etc

- **However……**
  - One man had served nine months for affray
  - One was late for interview as he was doing some of his 200 hours community service for beating up three men whilst drunk in club
  - One man had bite marks on arm from being attacked by gang. (Now avoids pubs; uses social clubs as safer environments)
  - One man beaten by mob at Christmas, trying to rescue neighbour’s son

“I wasn’t fighting...honest...”
How would they know they had a problem?

- In general did not mention specific health problems. Focus more on “lifestyle” elements.
  - Drinking all day
  - Drinking first thing
  - Staggering
  - Being unable to hold job down or perform it satisfactorily
  - Boozer’s nose
  - Neglecting themselves

- Some made point that you might not know – it would seem like “normal life”

- Others said they might not want to know

“I’ve always thought an alcoholic wants a drink every day. On the estate people get the 8.30 bus to be outside Wetherspoons at 9 o’clock. They stay all day. I think I’d have a problem if I drink in the daytime. I leave it till late on.” (Medium, St Helens)

“I suppose if someone told me it was affecting me health-wise I might give up. But you hear so many horror stories. If there’s something wrong with me I don’t want to know.” (Heavy, Birkenhead)
In the land of happy denial, somebody is always worse...

- Unanimously heavy drinkers moralised about the drinking behaviour of others to justify their own behaviour:

- They frown upon:
  - drinking at home
  - drinking spirits
  - drinking “bad stuff”
  - drinking in front of children
  - young women drinking (too much)
  - drugs

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“People tend to think that heavy drinking warnings don’t apply to them. They visualise falling down drunks. Somebody else” (Landlord)

“‘It can kill you. I’ve seen people drink rubbish. I won’t do that - I’m a bitter man...it can kill people, but they have never looked after themselves. I’ve always looked after myself when I have been drinking. Not everyone does” (Heavy, Crewe)
Drinkers versus Alcoholics: Worldview of respondents. How they normalise their own behaviour by reference to other people.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Me/Us</th>
<th>Them/Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In pubs</td>
<td>At home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visible</td>
<td>Semi-hidden – park benches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beer</td>
<td>Spirits, cheap drink, meths</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respectable</td>
<td>Disreputable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socialising</td>
<td>Isolated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appropriate times</td>
<td>All day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pleasure</td>
<td>Problem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In control</td>
<td>Out of control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drink is part of life</td>
<td>Life dominated by drink</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possibly minor health</td>
<td>Major health problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>consequences</td>
<td>Potential mortality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No lasting damage</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Where would they go if they had a problem?

- GP would be first port of call for most
- Family, if relationship is appropriate
  - Some also said family would be first to tell them if they had a problem
- Other outlets seen as follow-up in nature:
  - AA
  - Counselling
  - Specialist clinics
Motivations, benefits and barriers
Motivations for drinking

Need to belong is the key motivator

What others do helps normalise behaviour

Benefits to me include stress relief, escape, reward, (perceived) better sleep

Good day; bad day involving alcohol

**Good day**
- **Family** - having kids, day trips, children playing, sunshine
- **Sport** - football win (celebrate in the pub), bet on the horses, win darts match, good fishing catch
- **Friends** – laughing, joking, chat, in the pub and at home
- **Treats** – meals out, day trips, favourite pub, night out clubbing or dancing, DVD and takeaway

**Bad day**
- **Partner** – arguments, drink talking, regret
- **Work** – stressful, mistakes
- **Kids** - playing up or returning to ex partners
- **Sad and angry** - drinking and having rows with family, friends,
- **Not able to drink** – being sober, off licence shut, can’t drink more due to responsibilities
- **Lonely** – on my own in pub
- **Loss** – death of father, car break down, vandalism
- **Impact** - falling over, miss next day through hangover, still feel down day after drinking
- **Brain playing tricks** – blowing up every minor trouble

Respondents articulate far more negatives associated with drinking than positives. There is potential to leverage this to change behaviour and help maintain positive drinking experiences.
Good day; bad day

Heavy drinker – alcohol is key focus and there is a strong resentment towards authority
Good day; bad day

Hazardous drinker – aware of consequences of excess
Good day; bad day

Good days include friends – bad days involve drinking alone
### Behavioural Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preferred Behaviour: (drinking sensibly)</th>
<th>Competitive Behaviour: (drinking at current levels)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Benefits</strong></td>
<td><strong>Barriers</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Save money</td>
<td>• Feel less confident and more nervous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Do other things with time – broaden horizons</td>
<td>• Have less fun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Fewer arguments and better relationships with kids, partners – happier home life</td>
<td>• Social life would deteriorate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• More time with (grand) children</td>
<td>• Less sleep</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Health – fitter, more alert, longer life</td>
<td>• Life would be boring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Jobs – better prospects</td>
<td>• More fun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Lose weight</td>
<td>• More lonely – stay in more</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• No hangovers</td>
<td>• Would miss drinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Calmer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Stop letting people down</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>**Cost - it’s expensive</td>
<td><strong>Concerns</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Arguments with partner, family- feeling moody, aggressive</td>
<td>• After effects - headaches, hangovers, tiredness, anxiety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Concern about future health (liver damage)</td>
<td>• Being out of control and worries about behaviour when drunk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Getting arrested</td>
<td>• Letting people down</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Not seeing kids/grandkids</td>
<td>• Loss of job, can’t function at work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Neglecting yourself</td>
<td>• Getting arrested</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Benefits and barriers

- Although the men do see negatives of their drinking, emotionally the benefits of socialising, escape and reward outweigh the barriers.
- The intervention must focus on increasing the benefits of drinking less and increasing the barriers to drinking at current levels.
- These fall into 3 broad areas:
  - **Health** – daily fitness, after effects, sleep, emotional wellbeing, awareness of real health damage on “people like me”
  - **Wealth** – cost and pricing, job prospects
  - **Happiness** – impact on relationships, letting people down, opportunities to live life and not lose time to drink
Influencing drinking behaviour
Strategies for responsible drinking

- Tended to be pessimistic about possibility of cutting out/reducing alcohol.
  - Believe that if people want to drink, they will drink.
  - For some, why should they? Life’s too short.
  - Not enough credibility or clarity around problems/benefits.
- Some evidence of strategies to manage drinking
  - Fixed amounts of money – some “controlled” their drinking and amount of time spent in pubs by keeping £20. Once it was spent, they went home
  - Rules/Rituals: e.g. not drinking till after 8 o’clock, or in front of kids
  - Soft drinks in pubs
  - Some felt able to do this however majority felt unable/unwilling to swap to soft drinks
  - Did not feel right, felt left out, skitted, time drags
  - Trying cannabis instead (failed)

“I’ve been on pop. But it feels like I am in a different world when I am drinking and socialising” (Heavy, Crewe)
What do they think may work?

- **Pricing**
  - Respondents believed that putting prices up could reduce consumption
  - But for those in work, paying £2.00 to £2.70 per pint in pub is currently acceptable.
  - When there is less money around – through unemployment, shorter hours, less over-time etc - could reduce consumption.

- **Health**
  - If told had six months to live…might stop even super-heavies.
  - More clearly focussed health messages.

- **Education**
  - Although the unit system was not easy to understand (and for many not credible) others did get the point when explained on a one-to-one basis.
  - Some did not know and did not like the idea that they were in reality heavy drinkers. Did appear to make them re-think.
What do they think may work?

- **Support**
  - When life crises emerge.
  - Agencies, doctors, families and friends could help prevent resorting to drink

- **Social**
  - If pubs were all closed....removal of social element might have effect
  - But what else would they do? What fun is there?

- **Children**
  - Get people to think of consequences on children
  - Loss of respect
  - Not enough attention
  - Not being well enough/alive to see help/watch them grow

- **Testing At Work**
  - Contractors tested at places of work, so less/no ability to drink when working (Random basis – drawing coloured balls out of bag)

- **Other activities**
  - Especially in the evenings
What are Landlords’ prepared to do?

- To help but not preach
- Generally do not discuss level of drinking and associated problems with customers
- If they were approached they might give advice/direction
  - For instance, one landlord had taken a customer to the GP and had him registered as an alcoholic (with side effect of a drinks allowance of £90 per week, spent in the pub)
  - Another directed customer to AA
- Would stock leaflets with advice numbers to ring
  - Beer-mats with messages
  - Posters with simple information about units
- Joint meetings/training with local police/agencies might be welcome to share knowledge

“It’s not so bad once in a while (drinking) but every week, week in, week out, it will have an effect on (health). But that’s not my job. I can’t advise people on that.”
Summary and recommendations
Summary

- Drinking alcohol and visiting pubs is a rite of passage and a basic expectation - not conforming would take away men’s ability to participate in their social network.

- A powerful relationship exists between the desire for social interaction outside the home, which leads men to the pub, which leads men to drink.

- The key difference between heavy drinkers and those who have cut back is reaction to life events - many men moderate drinking due to responsibilities whilst others drink more heavily due to negative events.

- At the fringe we found other men who were very heavy drinkers and seemed to have had lifetime problems.

- To most drinkers, these people represented the “other”, the world of alcoholics that they did not feel part of and that helped maintain their own sense of self-worth.
Summary

- It was accepted that excessive drinking could damage health, however most underestimated their drinking and did not feel that they drank excessively – they do not see that their drinking is a problem.
- The main assumed health problem was liver disease, which would only affect alcoholics – knowledge of other issues was much patchier.
- Units were known about but only partially understood, often under-estimated and to most lacking in credibility (in terms of recommended maximums).
- For most, the benefits of socialising, escape and reward associated with drinking outweigh the barriers. There is insufficient concern about health or costs to make them wish to change their behaviour.
- In terms of other impacts, drink driving and violence were seen as past, and sometimes current problems – hangovers and emotional effects were of more immediate concern.
- Strategies to reduce drinking appeared limited. A key approach seems to be to limit the amount of cash taken.
- Landlords are keen to engage and are happy to help but not preach. They are under severe pressure and need to see a clear business benefit in terms of opportunities for new revenue.
Conclusions

- Considerable pessimism about how successful any approach to stop drinking might be, coupled with disbelief that it might be desirable given the identified benefits.
- Emphasis of activity should be on strategies for harm minimisation
- Behavioural goal should focus on cutting down alcohol in a way that is simple and achievable (e.g. 5 units or 2 ½ pints less each week)
- Key themes:
  - Increased pricing
  - Health messages - clarify, focus, de-mystify
  - Education on limits/units – simple, understandable, realistic
  - Alternative roles for pubs to retain social factor
  - Provision of alternative social activities outside of the pub
  - Support at time of crisis when consumption can become excessive
Conclusions - Stages of change

- The majority of men are not considering changing their drinking behaviour
- They are content - at the pre-contemplation stage
- There is a need to:
  - provide them with a good reason to contemplate change
  - provide tools to make it easy for them to act
  - support them in maintaining behaviour change to avoid relapse

Source: Prochaska and DiClemente
Recommendations – benefits and barriers

- The intervention should focus on increasing the benefits of drinking less and increasing the barriers to drinking at current levels which fall into in 3 areas:
  - **Health**
    - awareness of immediate damage on “people like me”, after effects, sleep, emotional wellbeing
  - **Wealth**
    - cost and pricing, job prospects
  - **Happiness**
    - impact on relationships, letting people down, opportunities to live life and not lose time to drink
Recommendations – engage groups

- The intervention must create a “pattern interrupt” trigger to break out of habitual behaviour. It is essential to engage groups of individuals to change the social norm and build belief that “everyone is doing it”
Recommendations – the process of persuasion

- Raise awareness of the **problem**
- Create a belief that **change needs to occur**
- Provide tools that make it **easy to act**
- Create **communities of interest**
- Track **progress** and **reinforce**
- Highlight impact on “people like me”

**Engage** | **Inspire** | **Embed**

**Products and services**

**Pubs**
Recommendations - potential social marketing actions

- **Communications** – *raise awareness of the problem and create conviction that change needs to occur*
  - immediate impact of drinking on “people like me” (physical and emotional wellbeing), realistic unit guidance and clear health impacts, impact on loved ones, time to live life to the full

- **Products and services** – *provide tools that make it easy to act*
  - new services for pubs, diversionary experiences, sleep clinics, drink cards/loyalty schemes, rewards and incentives for groups and individuals (perhaps involving an element of competition and personal/pub reward for cutting down)

- **Collaborations** – *create communities of interest*
  - partnerships with others who share our goal in the alcohol industry, delivering benefits to local pubs, integration of messages through healthcare and community channels

- **Policy** – *track progress and reinforce*
  - Send out clear message through increased pricing, mandatory testing in the workplace, measure impact
Next steps

- Share findings with stakeholders
- Co-create potential solutions
- Develop intervention themes, key messages, look and feel, tone of voice
- Pre-test interventions with core audience groups
- Implement intervention
- Track progress and monitor impact over time
Thank you – any questions?
Addiction theory - 12 steps – what can we learn?

- admitting that **one cannot control** the addiction - “I have a problem”
- recognising a “greater power” that gives strength - “I have the tools to deal with this”
- examining past errors with the help of a sponsor – “I have someone to turn to to learn where I went wrong before”
- making amends for past mistakes – “I can make things better”
- learning to live a new life with a new code of behaviour – “I know how to enjoy my new life”
- helping others that suffer from the same addictions – “I can use my experience positively”

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