

# Prevention and early intervention for alcohol-related harm: The case of Ireland

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A TRADITION OF  
INDEPENDENT  
THINKING



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# *Europe is still lacking sufficient coverage of psychological care*



World Health Day 2019: Europe still lacking sufficient coverage of psychological care

4 Apr 2019

*April 7: Europe is still lacking sufficient coverage of psychological care*

Universal coverage of health is the theme of the World Health Day 2019. One might think this would mainly concern third world countries and not Europe. Reality is that not all health sectors are developed at the same level and not all kinds of treatment are available for everyone. "This is especially the case for psychological treatments as Europe is still lacking sufficient coverage of psychological care " explains Koen Lowet of EFPA's Standing Committee on Psychology and Health.



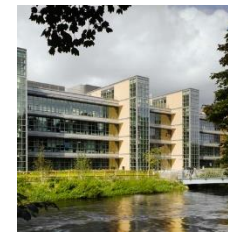
**The impact of mental health problems is enormous**



Please, mind the gap...



# Three concerning statistics for Irish in need of care



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1. Ireland has the second highest rate of binge drinking in the world

(HIS, 2017)



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2. Irish women ranked in top 10 for alcohol consumption

(Griswold et al., 2017)



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3. Those who drink consume significantly more alcohol than the per capital consumption

(11.46 Lt.; HRP, 2017)

# Three promising statistics for alcohol consumption in Ireland



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1. In 2017 alcohol consumption declined by  $\sim 1.4\%$  (RCD, 2017)



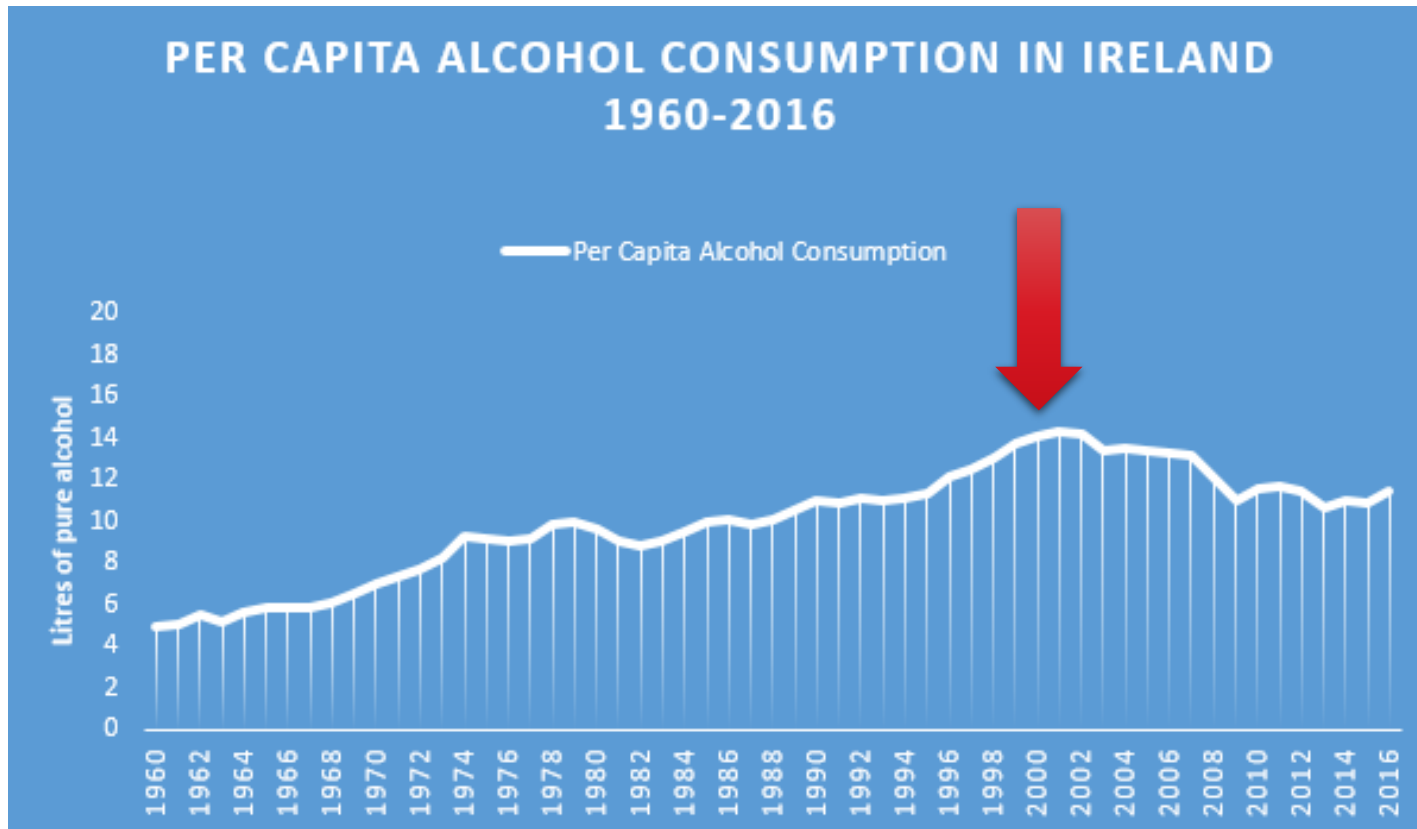
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2. Since 2005, alcohol consumption has fallen by 25% till 2016 (RCD, 2017)

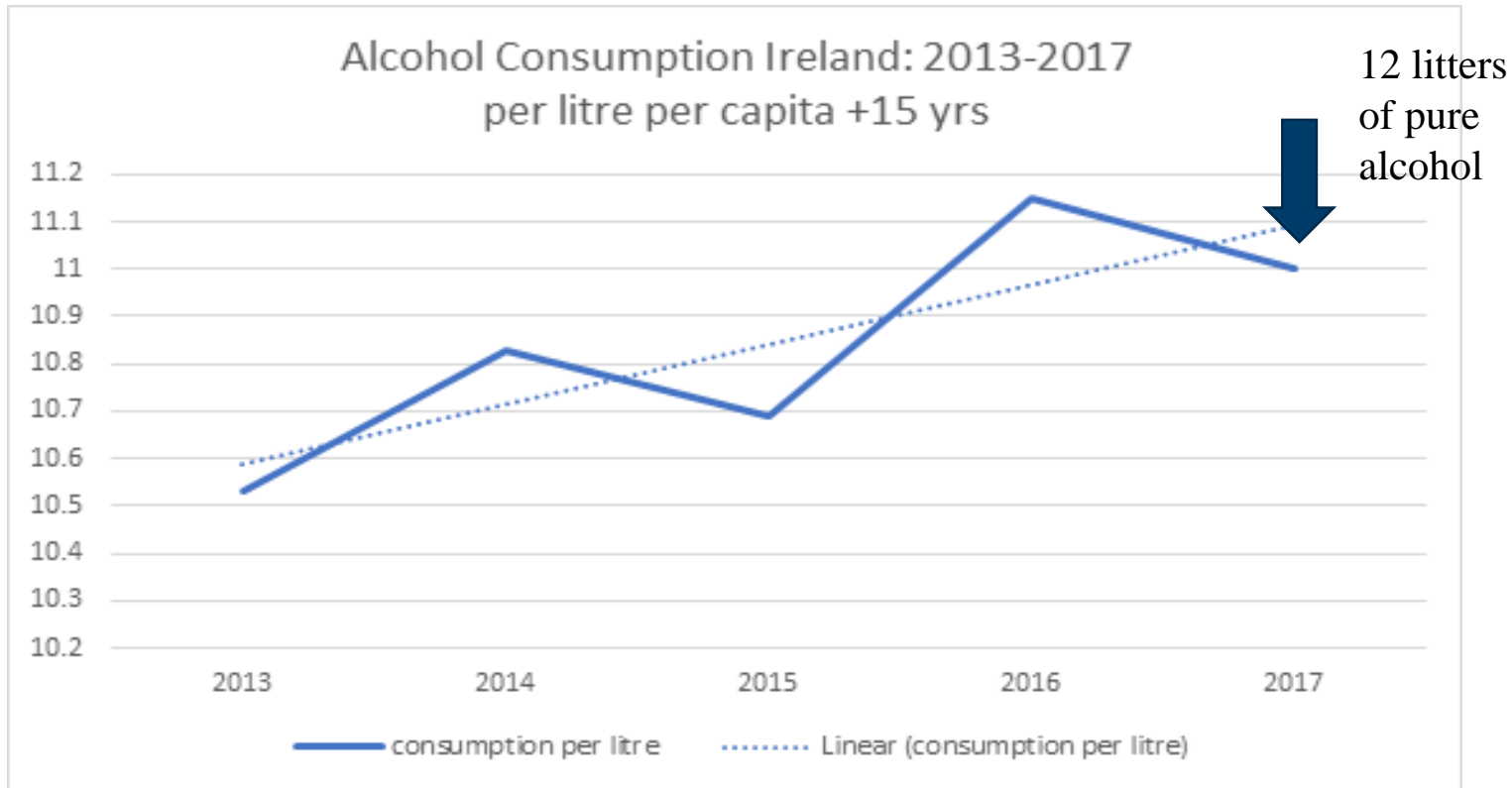
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3. Young Irish people are dinking less alcohol and swig to coffee, sports and non-alcohol alternatives (ESPAD, 2016)

# 1) How much alcohol Irish people drink?



## 2) How much alcohol is too much for Irish?



# Alcohol consumption



Per person/year



Last survey 2014; new expected 2020





# Alcohol-related harm




## Harm to health

In 2013:

**3** Deaths per day were alcohol related

**7,549** cases treated for problem alcohol use

An estimated **167,170** people suffered an alcohol-related assault



In 2014:

**1 in 3** self-harm cases were alcohol-related

1995 – 2013:

Rate of alcohol-related liver disease **trebled** between **1995 and 2013**

2001 – 2010:

More than **1 in 10** breast cancer cases attributed to alcohol

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# Economic impact



## Cost to economy and tax payer

€1.5 billion

spent on alcohol related hospital discharges.  
That's €1 for every €10 spent in public health

\*This excludes emergency care, general practice, psychiatric care and alcohol treatment

In 2012:

160,221

hospital bed days used  
for alcohol-related illness  
(3.6% of total bed days)

2013 survey

€41 million:

The estimated cost  
of alcohol-related  
absenteeism in 2013

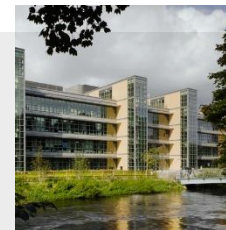
2013

5,513

people lost their job as a  
result of alcohol in 2013

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A 30% reduction in alcohol-related harm would save taxpayers an estimated €1 billion a year (Chief medical Officer of Ireland, 2016)



# Best practices: What to do about?

A synthesis of best practices will be discussed...

**But,**

2 practices from Ireland and UCC

- ***MiUSE***: My Understanding of Substance & Alcohol use Experiences
- ***REACT***: Responding to excessive alcohol consumption in third-level

# The *MiUSE* project aims:

## Identify

- Motivation for change
- Effective behavior change techniques that lower students' needs for taking drugs

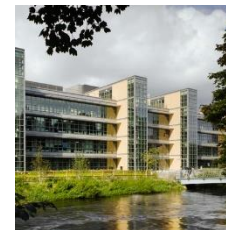
## Incorporate

- Students' needs / expectations
- A participatory involvement of students in developing the intervention

## Develop

- A digital Behaviour change harm reduction intervention
- A reliable information based online resources for students as service users





# MiUSE: An interactive web-platform



50 YEARS OF  
APPLIED  
PSYCHOLOGY



HISRC

- **A responsive web application:**
  - Fully functioning in all e-devices
  - Avatar-assisted students will guide users
  - A brief personalized feedback based on Motivational Interviewing techniques
- **A tailored-made brief harm-reduction activities:**
  - Mindful behavioral choice skills related to drug experimentation
  - Values and committed action personalized plan
  - Recognition of alternatives than drug use activities
- **An informative tool with suggestions for students who do not experimenting**
- **A guide for individuals interesting in helping those in need**



# REACT: Responding to excessive alcohol consumption in third-level

Tailored accreditation & award system for those institutions dealing with excessive alcohol consumption among students

2 REACTions phases:

- **Phase I**: A mandatory phase:
  - E-pub personalized intervention for all incoming students
  - Development of:
    - an alcohol policy
    - A steering committee
    - Safety issues are planned for major events
    - A tracking mechanism for alcohol harm indices and training are formed
- **Phase II**: An optional phase:
  - A series of REACTions

Thank you for your attention

For more info:

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