

Pricing Policies to Reduce Harm – the Scottish experience

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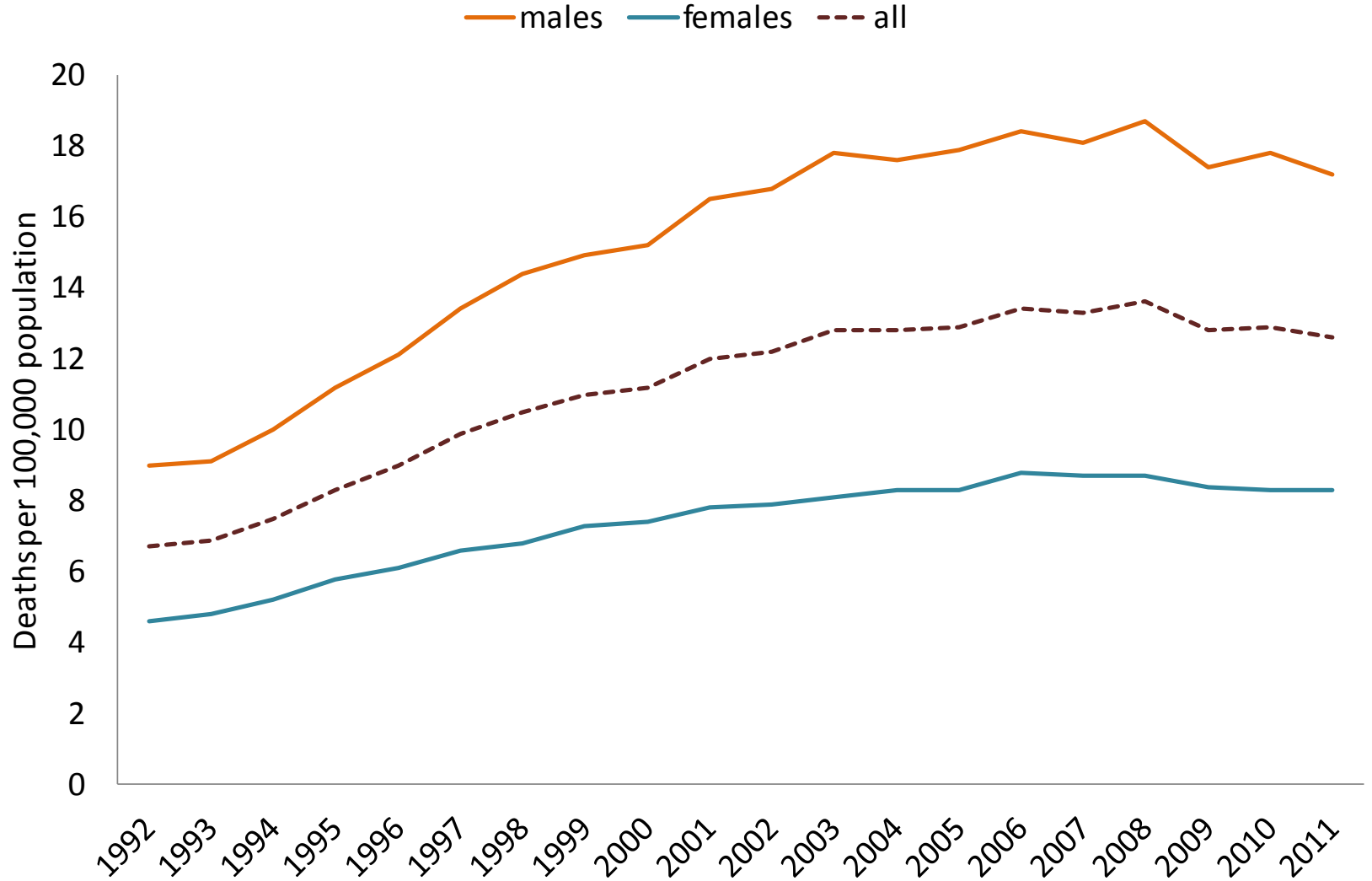


UK and Devolved Powers

- Devolution (1999) transfer of powers from the UK Parliament to the Scottish Parliament and the Assemblies in Wales and Northern Ireland.
- UK – foreign policy; defence and national security; energy; immigration; taxation; trade and industry.
- Scottish Parliament – health; education; justice; economic development; agriculture; fire service.

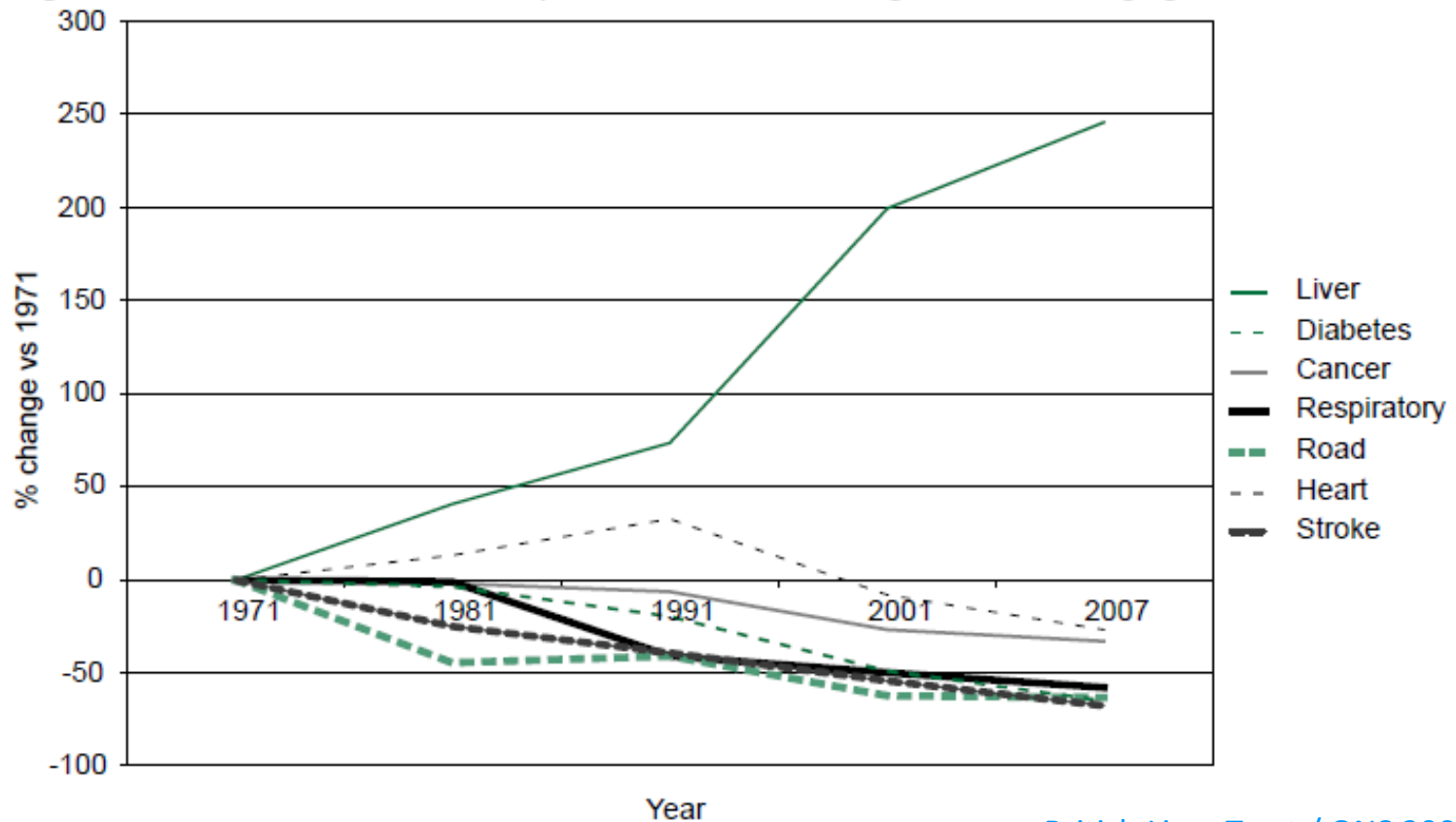


Figure 2.1 Alcohol-related deaths per 100,000 population in the UK, 1992-2011 (ONS)



UK Mortality Trends

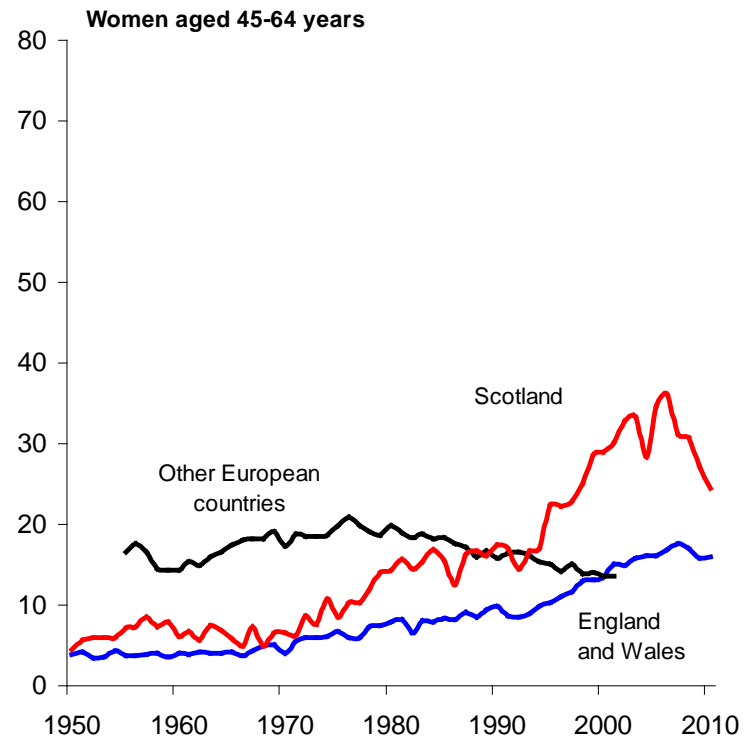
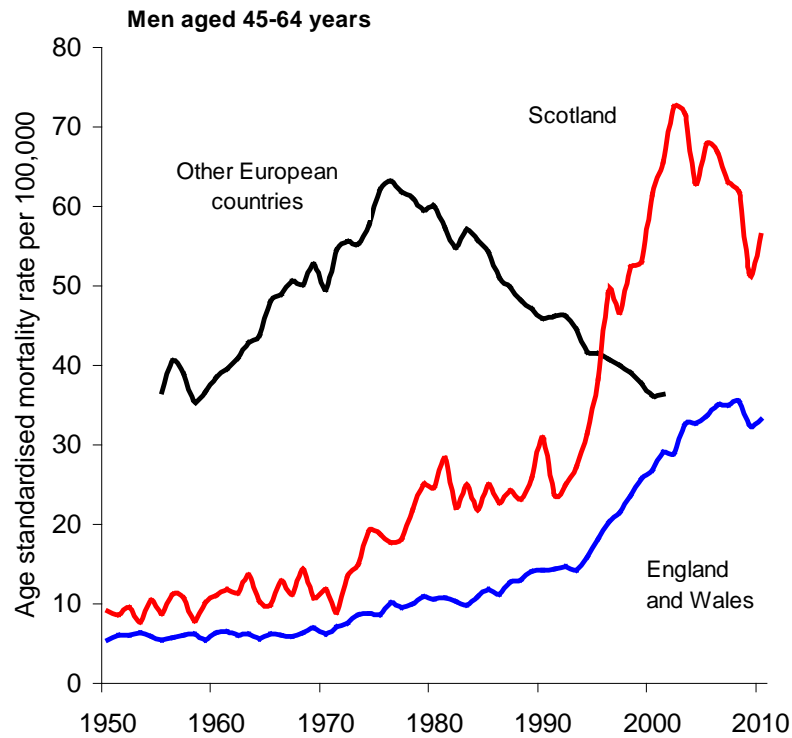
Figure 6: Movements in mortality 1971–2007 (Deaths per million of population)⁸³



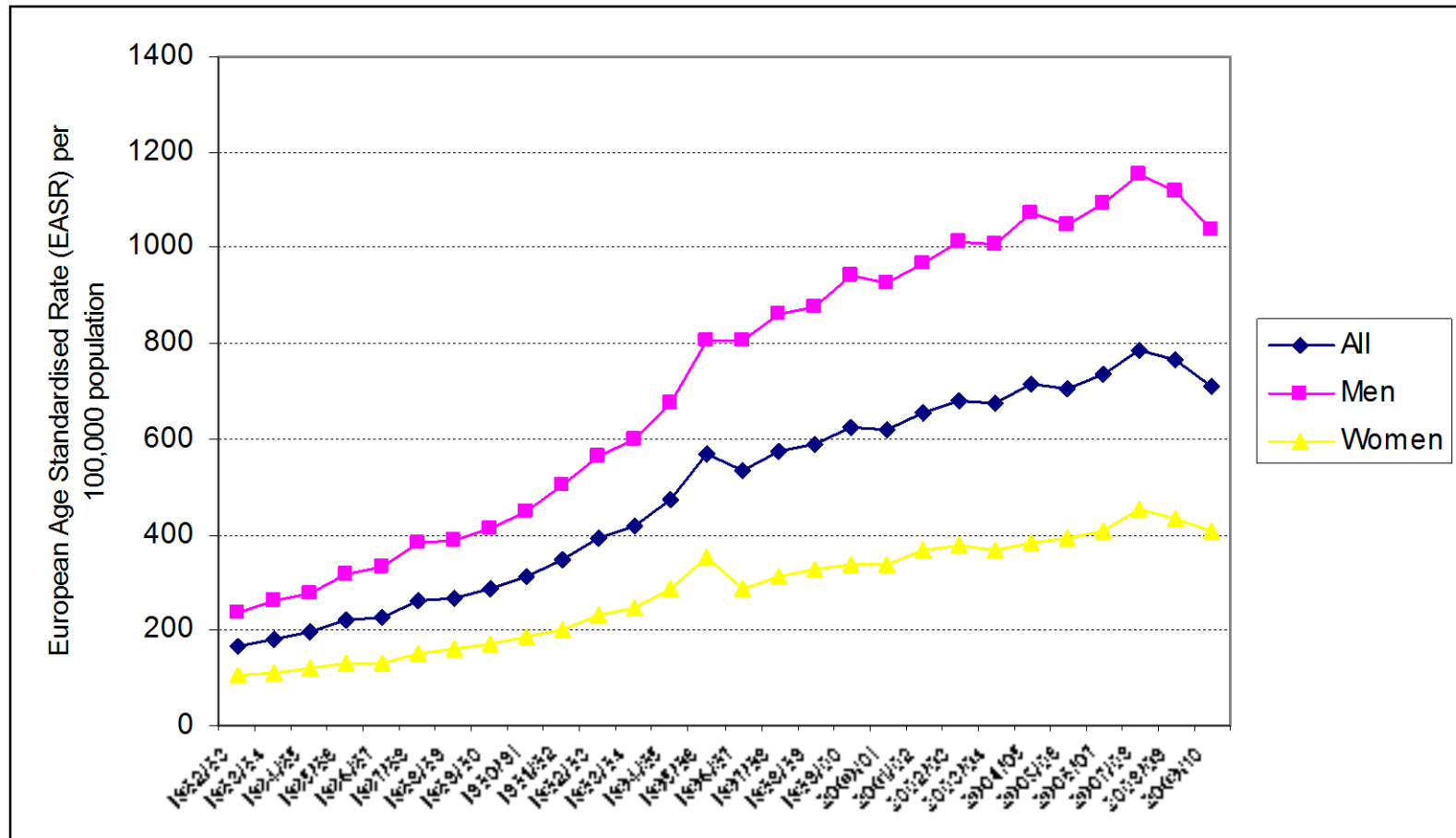
British Liver Trust / ONS 2009

Liver Cirrhosis Death Rates 1950-2010

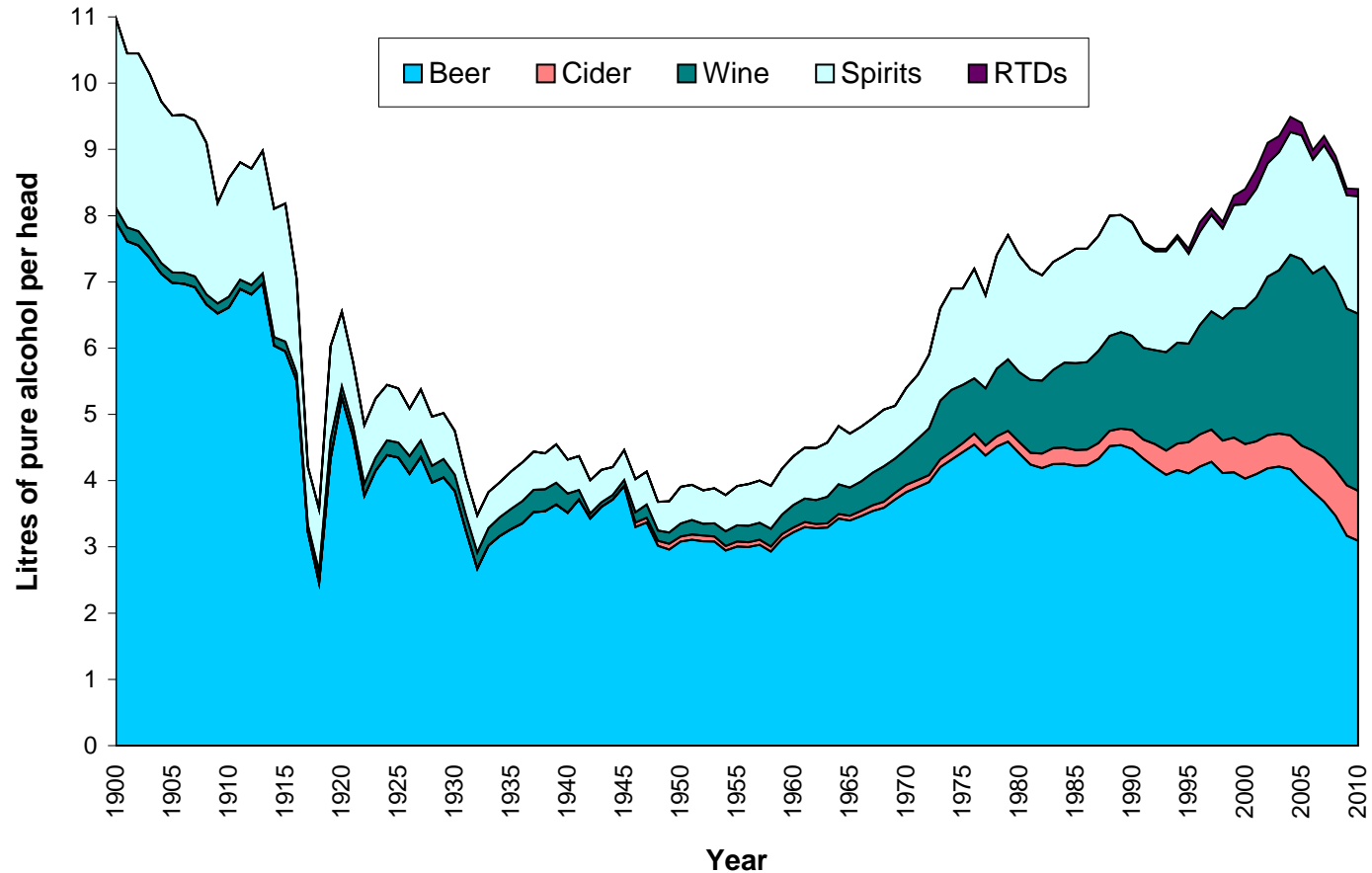
[Leon and McCambridge Lancet 2006 *updated*]



Alcohol-related general hospital discharges, Scotland 1982/3 – 2009/10

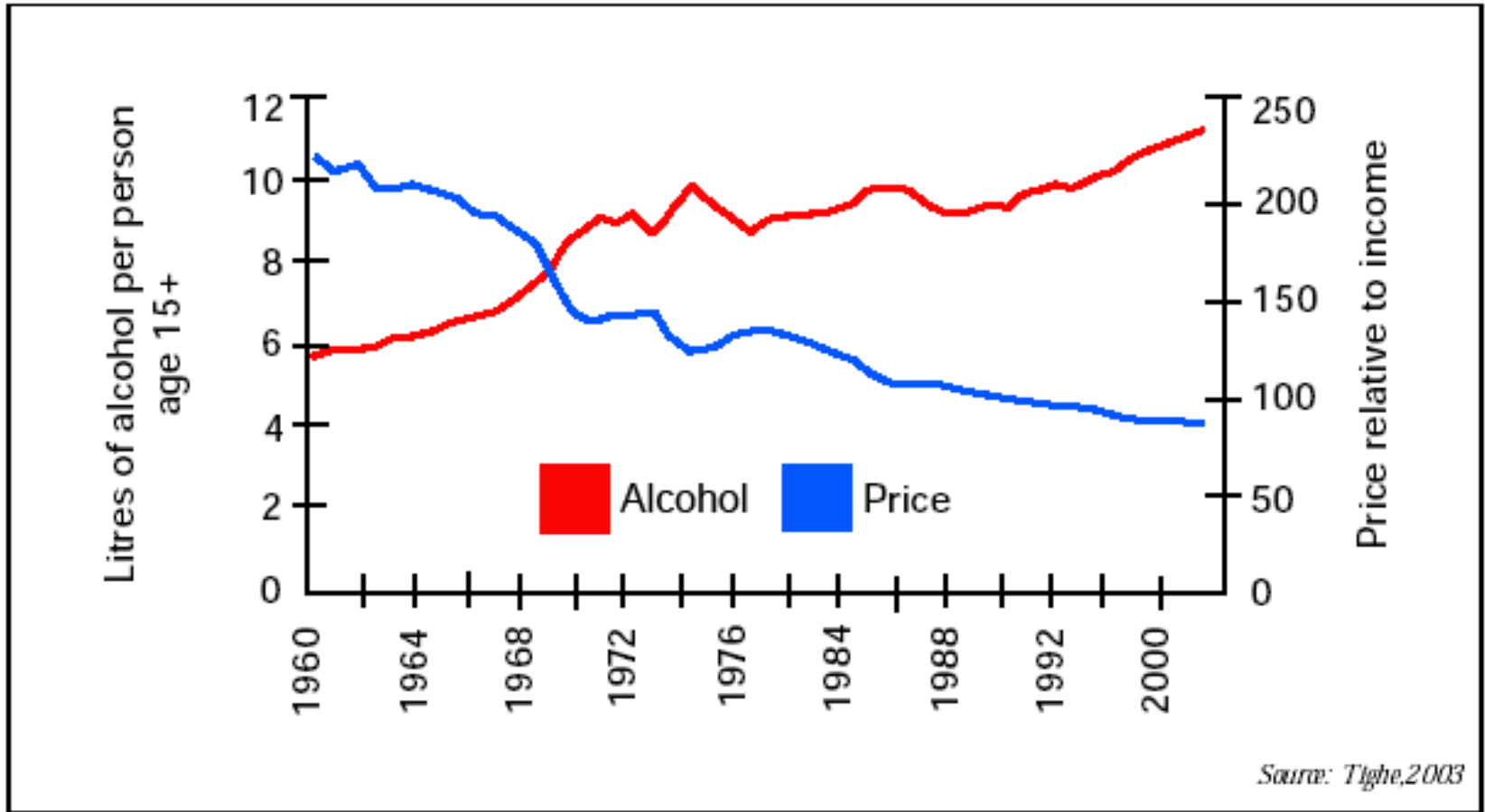


Per capita (litres per head per year)
consumption of pure alcohol in the UK population, 1900–2010

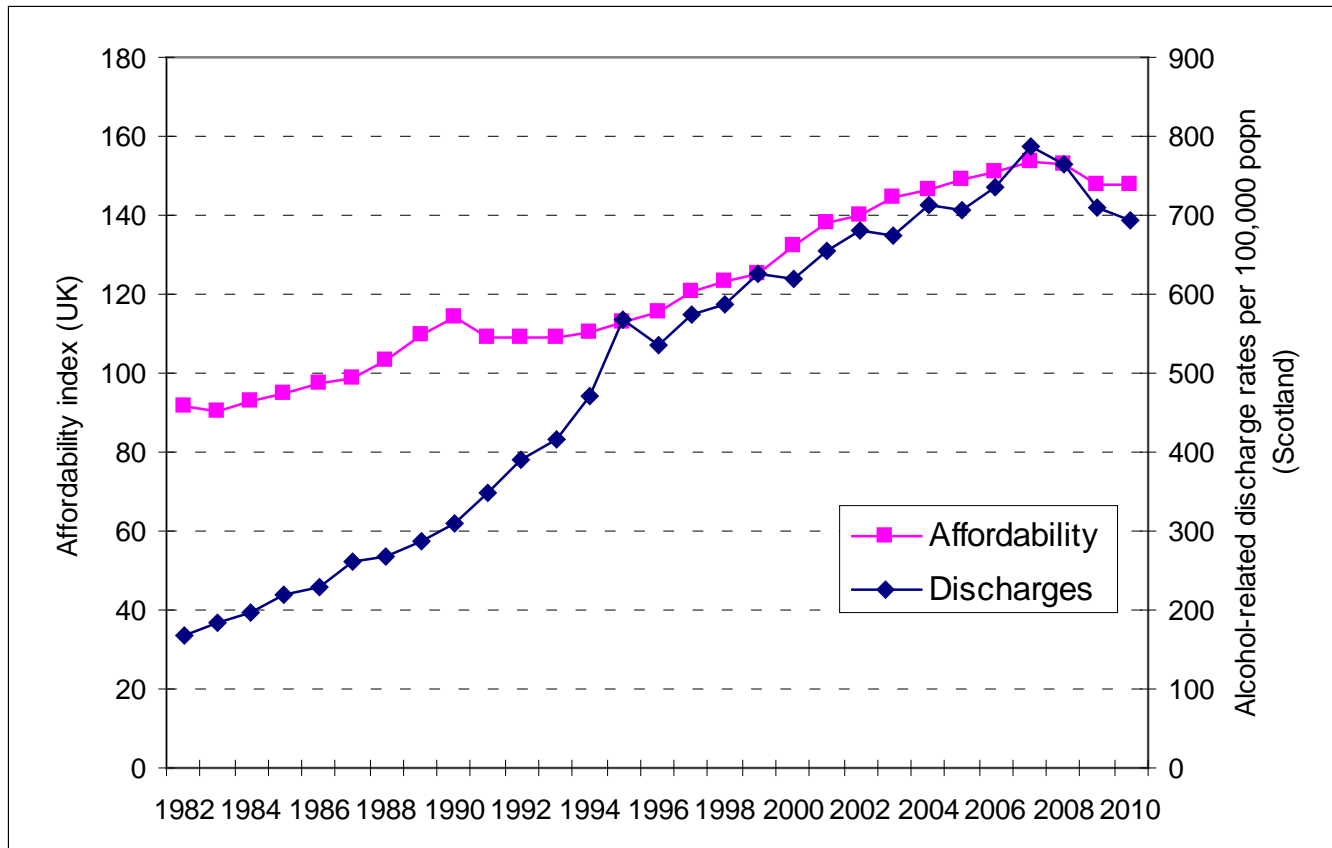


Sources: BBPA Statistical Handbook; Cancer Research UK

Price & Consumption Trends



UK Affordability Index v's Alcohol-related Discharges (Scotland) 1982-2010

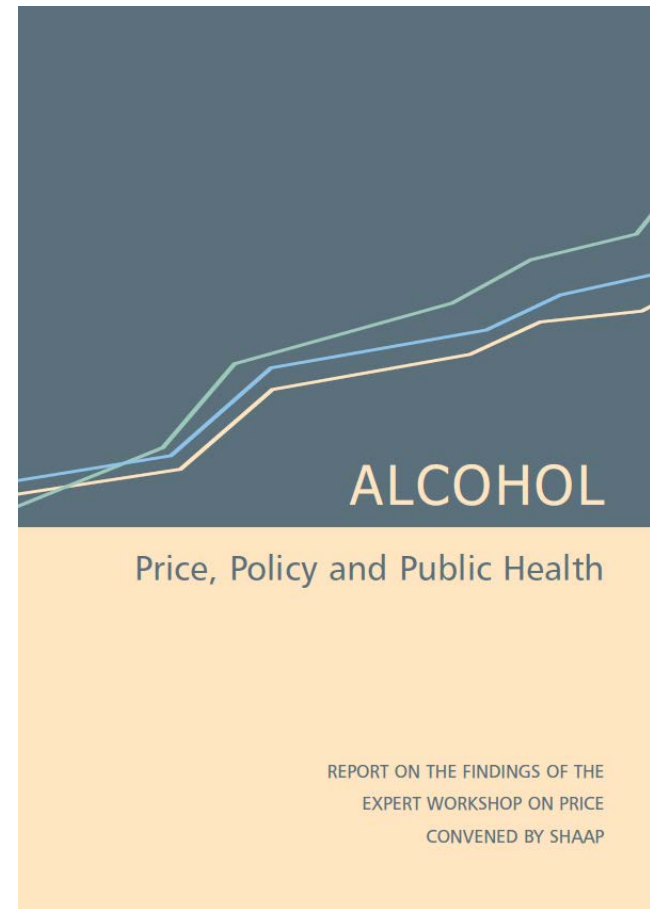


Availability of Cheap Alcohol in Scotland


- The majority of alcohol sold today is bought from off-sales, primarily the major supermarket chains (70%).
- Key features of this retail sector - low prices, heavily discounted products, alcohol sold at a loss.
- Result – continual availability of alcohol at very low prices. A man can exceed the low risk weekly limits for just £4/\$6.



Policy Developments in Scotland 2007/8



Minimum Unit Pricing (MUP) Scotland


- Minimum retail price for a **unit of alcohol**, linked to alcohol content, price set in regulation by Scottish Parliament.
- Policy aims to reduce consumption and specifically targets alcohol which is cheap relative to strength.
- MUP affects the whole population but the effect is greater for those who drink the most. 
- Heaviest drinkers buy more of the cheapest alcohol. Harmful drinkers account for 64% of low cost alcohol (below 40p/unit) sold in UK.

Anticipated Benefits of MUP

- MUP of 50p (75 cents) will reduce alcohol-related deaths by 60 in the first year and by over 300 by year ten.
- MUP of 50p (75 cents) will reduce hospital admissions by 1660 in year one increasing to 6630 by year ten.
- Estimated cumulative value of harm reduction of £942 million (\$1.4 billion). [University of Sheffield Modelling 2012]



Empirical Evidence from Canada

- 10% increase in minimum prices reduced alcohol consumption by 8.43% in two Canadian provinces.
 - Larger effects on off sales than on sales and consumption of higher strength beer and wine declined the most.
- 
- 10% increase in the average minimum price for all alcoholic beverages associated with a 32% reduction in wholly alcohol attributable deaths. [Stockwell et al 2013]

Taxation V's MUP

- Taxation and MUP are complementary measures and together will deliver greater benefits than taxation alone.
- 36% increase in alcohol taxes in the UK since 2008 has not eliminated cheap alcohol.
- To bring the cheapest products up to the same level as a 50p (75 cents) MUP using taxation alone would require duty increases of more than 600% - not politically viable.

Scotland – Other Legislative and Policy Measures

- Licensing Scotland Act (2005) prohibits ‘happy hours’ in on- sales and introduces a licensing objective ‘to protect and improve public health’.
- Alcohol etc. (Scotland) Act 2010 prohibits bulk discount buys in off-sales purchases and limits promotions to the alcohol display areas.
- Public health levy introduced for larger premises selling both alcohol and tobacco.
- Proposal to reduce drink driving limit 0.08 BAC to 0.05.
- ABI program.

Monitoring and evaluation of Scotland's alcohol strategy

- Led by NHS Health Scotland
- Seven studies - 2010 to 2015 - evaluating:
 - Implementation of licensing legislation
 - Delivery of brief interventions
 - Impact of increased investment in specialist services
 - Changes in self-reported knowledge and attitudes to alcohol
 - Trends in alcohol consumption and affordability
 - Trends in alcohol-related harms
 - Implementation of minimum pricing

MUP – Current Status

- May 2012: Legislation is approved by the Scottish Parliament and the global alcohol producers immediately announce their intention to mount a legal challenge.
- May 2013: Lord Doherty issues Court of Session judgement which concludes - *“In my opinion, none of the challenges to the minimum pricing measures is well founded. There is no proper basis for the petitioners being granted any of the remedies which they seek. The petition is refused”*.
- Industry appealing Lord Doherty’s judgement. The case will be heard by 3 Appeal Judges early 2014.

Tactics of Big Alcohol

- Action by the global alcohol corporations mirrors the tactics of the tobacco industry which seek to prevent or delay the implementation of legitimate public health measures by democratically elected governments.
- MUP is essential for reducing alcohol-related harm in Scotland. It is for countries to determine the level which they wish to afford to public health and the way in which that level is to be achieved.
- Industry has succeeded in taking MUP off the table in England and has been very influential in building opposition to the Scottish Government's plans in Europe.



Report produced by an independent group of experts with no involvement from the alcohol industry. Top ten recommendations for policy based on the evidence of what will be most effective in reducing harm. These include pricing policies; restricting the availability of alcohol and prohibiting alcohol advertising and sponsorship.



Competing Frames

- Alcohol is normal. Problems arise when individuals misuse it. Solution - change the behaviour of the minority through education. [industry frame]
- Problem is not with the individual but with the product. Solution - make the environment less pro-alcohol and reduce per capita consumption. [public health frame]



Exposing Vested Interests

- Industry influencing presence in public policy process.
- Industry-funded research which seeks to cast doubt on the evidence base.
- Partnerships which focus on ineffective policies.
- Role of Big Alcohol in sustaining consumption and consequent problems.



Enabling Factors

- Robust evidence base.
- Consistent messaging and focus on ‘best buys’ of price and availability.
- Effective advocacy coalition.
- Political leadership.



Challenges

- Promoting understanding of the evidence base.
- Seeing alcohol harm as a product problem not a people problem.
- Exposing the role of commercial vested interests in the policy process.
- Challenging the ubiquity and centrality of alcohol in our society.

Moving Forward

- Advocacy should focus on alcohol control measures.
- Highlight links between increased consumption, harm and globalisation.
- Learn from the tobacco control movement about building effective advocacy coalitions.
- Establish alcohol control advocacy coalitions at local, national and global level.