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Drinking Patterns Among Adult Poles

Results of the 2008 survey

commissioned by

**The State Agency for the Prevention of
Alcohol Related Problems**



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Main Survey Questions

Quantitative Perspective:

- ✓ Identification of current alcohol consumption patterns among adult Poles.

Qualitative Perspective:

- ✓ How do persons with hazardous and harmful alcohol use assess their drinking?
- ✓ What is their awareness of harm resulting from alcohol consumption?
- ✓ How do they perceive 'safe' alcohol use limits?



2008 Population Survey

- Nationwide random sample of 1,075 adults
- Field survey conducted by CBOS in June 2008

Quantitative data does not accurately reflect the level of alcohol consumption by respondents, but helps to identify alcohol use patterns, attitudes, and opinions.

Consumption of alcoholic beverages as declared in social surveys is considerably lower (40-60%) than this resulting from alcohol sales numbers.



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Abstainers

are **more often** observed among:

- women,
- people with the lowest income,
- people older than 65,
- low education groups,
- people declaring themselves as believers



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Reasons for abstinence from alcohol

I do not drink:

- | | |
|---|-----|
| 1. because I do not like alcohol | 37% |
| 2. due to health-related reasons | 35% |
| 3. for other reasons (low income, religious observance, because of my addiction or addiction of a family member, for other reasons) | 8% |





What do Poles drink?

Poles consume:

- spirits 69%
- wine 64%
- beer 75%





Alcohol Consumption Patterns

• spirits only	8.5%
• wine only	7.7%
• beer only	10.0%
• spirits and wine	8.4%
• spirits and beer	17.6%
• wine and beer	13.5%
• spirits, wine and beer	34.2%

(5% Poles declare that they drink moonshine,
12% Poles declare that they drink home-made wine)



Average alcoholic beverage consumption per year

Spirits	34 times
Wine	18 times
Beer	67 times



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Average consumption at one go

Spirits	180 ml
Wine	180 ml
Beer	670 ml



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When do Poles drink?

on weekends	65%
on week days	4%
hard to say	31%

Daily consumption:

spirits	0.7%
wine	0.4%
beer	2.9%





Occasions for drinking alcohol

Vodka:

- social gatherings 34%
- birthday parties 33%
- holidays (Easter, Christmas) 8%
- no particular occasion 7%

Wine

- birthday parties 21%
- social gatherings 20%
- holidays (Easter, Christmas) 15%
- other occasions 15%

Beer

- no particular occasion 42%
- social gatherings 34%
- birthday parties 5%



Where do Poles consume alcohol?

at private homes

- 61% of beer consumers,
- 70% of vodka consumers,
- 80% of wine consumers

at gastronomic outlets

- 12% of beer consumers,
- 13% of wine consumers,
- 14% of vodka consumers

in the open air

- 6% of wine consumers,
- 15% of vodka consumers,
- 28% of beer consumers





Social drinking patterns

I drink	vodka	wine	beer
alone	2%	2%	19%
with family	53%	67%	34%
with friends	62%	45%	53%
with strangers	2%	2%	0.3%





Highest consumption – women who are

- aged 18-29 and 30-39,
- single,
- graduates of secondary and tertiary education,
- residents of cities with a population of 50,000-500,000 and higher than 500,000,
- students,
- white-collar workers without higher education,
- not bound by any religion,
- in their opinion well-off.





Highest consumption – men who are

- aged 30-39 and 40-49,
- graduates of basic vocational education,
- unskilled workers,
- residents of cities with a population of 50,000-500,000,
- single or divorced,
- not bound by any religion,
- in their opinion not well-off.





Consumption Concentration

100% alcohol	Percentage of users	Percentage of consumed alcohol per year
up to 1.2l	47%	5%
from 1.2l to 6l	34%	25%
from 6l to 12l	11%	24%
more than 12l	8%	46%



Qualitative Survey

- Focus Group Interview Survey
- Survey conducted by Inqesta in December 2008
- 6 discussion groups (48 respondents):
 - 3 groups in Warsaw and in Jelenia Góra
 - 4 groups composed of men and 2 groups composed of women



Difficulty with the assessment of individual drinking pattern

results from:

- different perception of beer, wine and vodka
- being unfamiliar with the notion of standard unit of alcohol,
- difficulty with converting consumed alcoholic beverages into pure (100%) alcohol,
- lack of awareness of the capacity of alcoholic beverage packaging and glasses in which alcohol is served (especially among women).



Typical drinking patterns and the last occasion for alcohol consumption

Women tend to minimize their drinking habits, whereas men tend to exaggerate them

During the last occasion for alcohol consumption, women drank much more than the amount they declared as a typical drinking pattern (AUDIT), whereas men did the opposite.



Going over the limit

During the latest alcohol use, low risk drinking limit was exceeded by

- **33% of women**
- **70% of men**



Alcohol as a source of benefits

Alcohol, regardless of current consumption patterns, is decidedly more often perceived by the respondents as a source of benefits than harms.

Therefore, abstinence as the objective of prevention activity is not widely accepted by any group of alcohol users.

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Negative consequences of alcohol use

- Negative social consequences of alcohol use, more strongly than health-related ones, motivate to limiting the amount of consumed alcohol.
- Serious overdose conditions are not perceived as a health-related harm.
- Using ‘chasers’ is the most common method of relieving hangover.



What is 'safe' use of alcohol according to the respondents:

drinking, which does not bring negative consequences, and safety does not relate to alcohol consumption limits, but to the circumstances; company, place, eating while drinking, type of consumed alcohol.



‘Safe’ Alcohol Use Limits – according to WHO

- Alcohol is a toxic substance, therefore alcohol consumption is never risk-free.
- Based on scientific research, alcohol use levels that on average bring possibly the lowest risk of health-related harm have been determined.





Safe Alcohol Use Limits - Men

Occasional drinking:

No more than 6 units of alcohol (60g of pure alcohol) **at one go** = 3 bottles (0.5l each) of beer, 3 glasses (200ml each) of wine or 180ml of vodka.

Daily drinking:

At least two days of abstinence per week,

No more than 4 units of alcohol (i.e. 40g of pure alcohol) a day = 2 bottles of beer (0.5l each), 2 glasses of wine (12% abv) (200ml each) or 120ml of vodka.

Over one week:

No more than 280ml of pure alcohol = 14 bottles (0.5l) of beer, slightly more than 3 bottles (0.75l) of wine or 1.6 of half-litre bottle of vodka. **NEVER AT ONE GO!**





Safe Alcohol Use Limits - Women

Occasional drinking

No more than 4 units of alcohol (40g of pure alcohol) **at one go** = 2 bottles (0.5l each) of beer, 2 glasses (200ml each) of wine or 120ml of vodka.

Daily drinking:

At least two days of abstinence per week,

No more than 2 units of alcohol (i.e. 20g of pure alcohol) a day = 1 bottle of beer (0.5l), 1 glass of wine (12% abv) (200ml) or 60ml of vodka.

Over one week:

No more than 140g of pure alcohol = 7 bottles (0.5l) of beer, slightly less than 2 bottles (0.75l) of wine or 0.8 of half-litre bottle of vodka. **NEVER AT ONE GO!**





Source of knowledge on alcohol

Main sources of knowledge on alcohol are:

- Experiences of adult persons who are important to us,
- Own experience.

Other sources:

- The press, advertisements, television,
- Dichotomic character of information on alcohol and results of drinking has been emphasised:
 - Providing information that encourages alcohol use.
 - Presenting extreme cases of pathologies resulting from drinking.





Recommendations

Prevention activity addressed to adult alcohol consumers requires:

- educating about health harms resulting from alcohol use.
- encouraging to the assessment of individual alcohol consumption patterns.
- counselling on reducing consumption to low risk level.

