



Fourth WHO Forum on Alcohol, Drugs and Addictive Behaviours
Public health dimensions of alcohol, drug use and addictive behaviours:
taking stock of the past and looking into the future
27-30 June 2023

WMA statement on urgent action needed to address global impact of alcohol consumption through implementation of the WHO Global Action Plan, tackling of social determinants, and countering of commercial interference

Distinguished delegates, esteemed colleagues,

On behalf of the World Medical Association- representing over 9 million physicians worldwide - I stand before you today to address critical issues related to alcohol consumption and its detrimental impact on global health.

We commend the implementation of the WHO Global Alcohol Action Plan 2022–2030, as a vital framework to guide our efforts and urge member states to ensure its full and effective implementation. The misuse of alcohol is not an isolated issue, but rather, deeply intertwined with social determinants of health. These determinants, including socioeconomic status, education, and cultural norms, must be considered to develop holistic strategies that address the root causes and reduce health disparities.

Health professionals play a pivotal role in the prevention, treatment, and recovery of individuals affected by alcohol, drugs, and addictive behaviors. The World Medical Association strongly emphasizes the importance of adequate education and resources for healthcare providers to deliver evidence-based interventions and support. We must also prioritize early detection, intervention, and the integration of addiction medicine specialists within the medical workforce to enhance patient outcomes and reduce the burden on individuals and society. Alcohol abuse often starts at a young age and remains highly prevalent in the adolescent population. It is therefore imperative to prioritize effective prevention strategies that target this particular group to make a significant impact on the health and well-being of our future generations.

Furthermore, effective prevention of alcohol-related harm necessitates Member States to adopt strong and transparent strategies to protect public health interests from interference by commercial entities. The WMA holds significant reservations regarding the participation of the alcohol industry in the global dialogue of health protection and promotion. The involvement of the alcohol industry should be strictly limited to their functions as producers and distributors of alcohol. We believe that the establishment of a comprehensive global regulatory framework for alcohol, modelled on the WHO Framework Convention on tobacco control, would serve as a robust legal structure to prevent harmful practices associated with alcohol consumption.

In conclusion, the World Medical Association stands firmly committed in collaborating with the WHO and all other relevant stakeholders, in implementing the WHO Global Alcohol Action Plan. We call for greater attention to the social determinants of health, increased support for health professionals, the establishment of a legally binding regulatory instrument, and the unequivocal protection of public health from commercial interference. Together, let us redouble our efforts to create a healthier, safer, and more equitable world for all.

Thank you.

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