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# Global Status Report on Alcohol 2004

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World Health Organization  
Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse  
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# **Part I**

## **Global overviews**

Alcohol consumption and beverage preferences

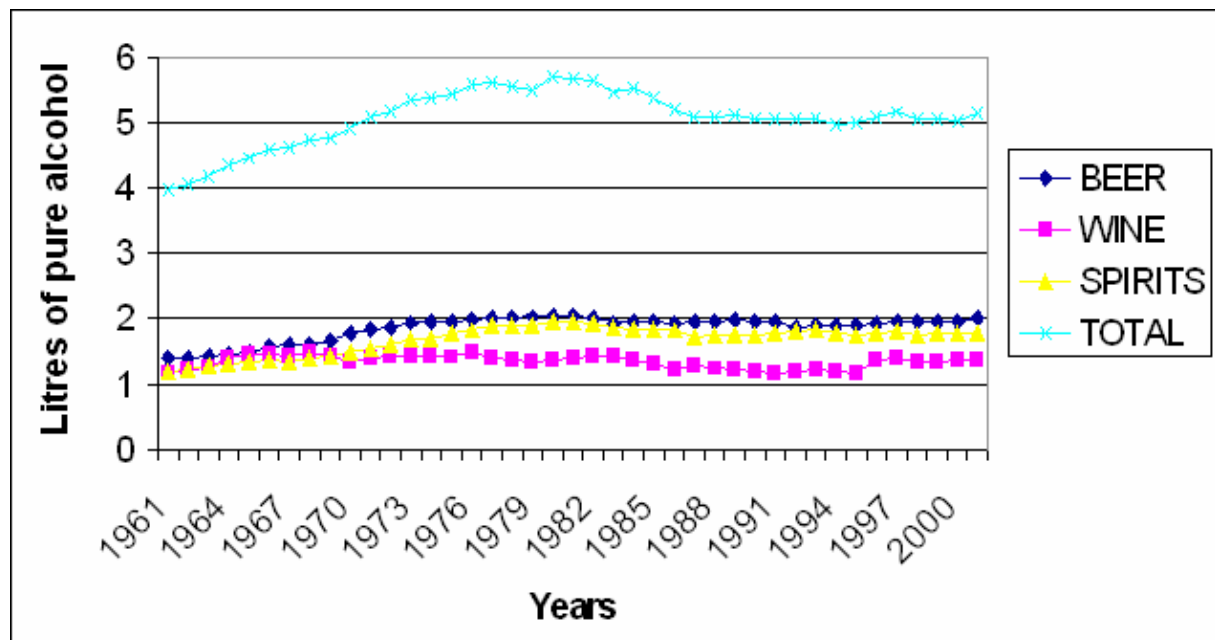
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## Global overviews

### Alcohol consumption and beverage preferences

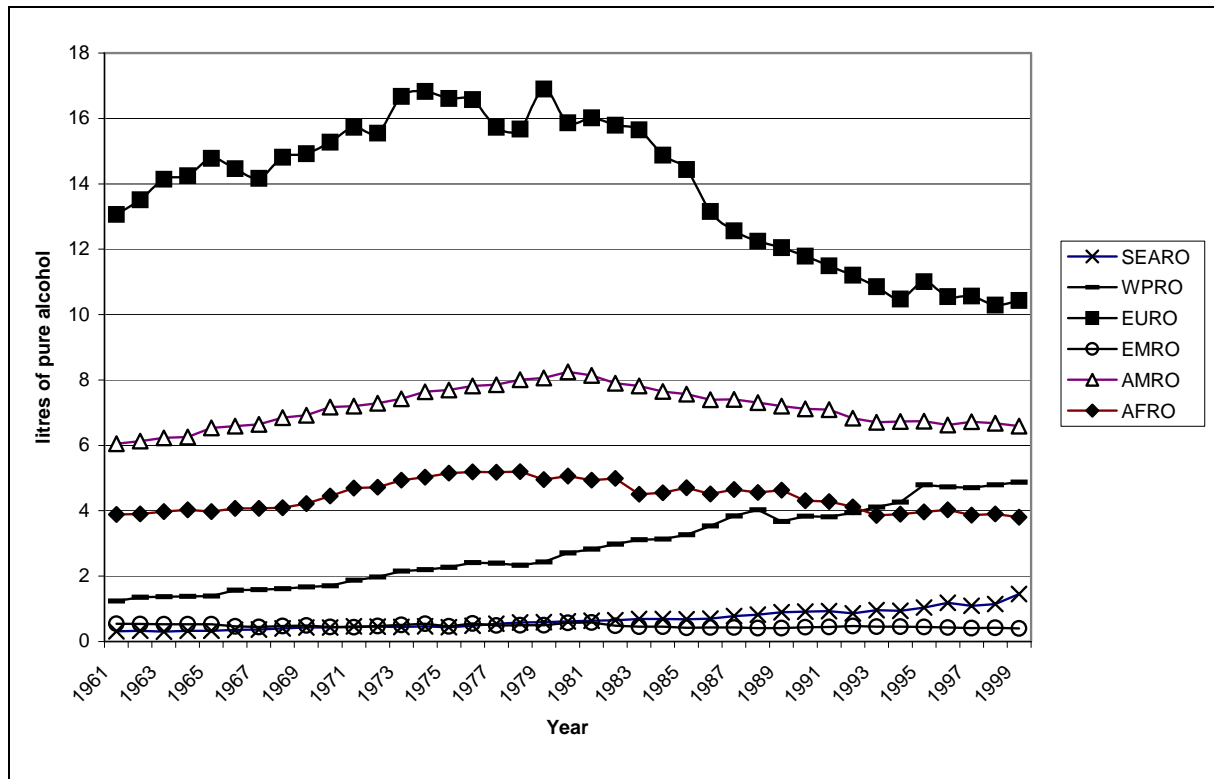
Figure 2 shows the unweighted means of adult per capita consumption across all countries for total consumption, and beer, wine and spirits separately. Unweighted here means that the corresponding population size of countries was not used, and hence each country received the same weight. The graph shows an increase in total consumption until the beginning of the 1980s, and then a slight decrease to a fairly stable level of about five litres of pure alcohol per adult capita. From the total alcohol consumption, close to equal parts are made up of beer, wine and spirits respectively. For all years the mean adult per capita is 5.1 litres of pure alcohol, of which beer accounts for 1.9 litres, wine 1.3 litres and spirits 1.7 litres. On a global level increases and decreases may cancel each other out and therefore there seems to be a rather stable level of consumption, and also stable for the different beverages.

Figure 2: Unweighted means of global per capita consumption 1961 to 2001



When the analysis of trends in consumption is done for the WHO Regions, a different picture emerges. Figure 3 shows the trend as population weighted means of adult per capita consumption in the different WHO Regions over a period of almost 40 years. The European Region (EUR), the African Region (AFR) and the Region of the Americas (AMR) all reached their highest consumption about the same time, in the early 1980s, although the level of the consumption is obviously much higher in the European Region (EUR) than in the other regions. The Eastern Mediterranean Region (EMR) displays a steady low consumption. The two regions showing recent and continuing increases in consumption are the South-East Asian Region (SEAR) and the Western Pacific Region (WPR).

Figure 3: Population weighted means of the recorded adult per capita consumption in the WHO Regions 1961-1999



The regional data indicates that for the WHO Regions other than EMR (mostly countries with majority Muslim populations) there is a certain trend towards harmonization of the consumption levels. On a regional level, those with the highest consumption are decreasing, while those with the lowest are increasing their consumption. This also falls within the explanatory model that many developing countries are increasing their alcohol consumption with an increasing level of economic development. On a more general level the link between economic prosperity and rising alcohol consumption can also be seen e.g. for the Nordic countries and Ireland. Of course the regional level also hides large differences within countries, as again increases and decreases may cancel each other out.

Data at the country level as regards adult per capita consumption can be found in each country profile. For an overview of all the countries with the most recent data, Table 3 shows the recorded adult per capita consumption for all available countries for the year 2000 or 2001, arranged from the lowest recorded consumption to the highest.

Table 3: Total recorded alcohol per capita consumption (15+), in litres of pure alcohol

Country	Total	Country	Total	Country	Total	Country	Total
Iran	0.00	Brunei Darussalam	0.49	Kiribati	1.66	Jamaica	3.37
Kuwait	0.00	Bhutan	0.57	Mozambique	1.67	Bolivia	3.43
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya (the)	0.00	Syrian Arab Republic (the)	0.62	Fiji	1.69	El Salvador	3.45
Saudi Arabia	0.00	Micronesia (Federated States of)	0.64	Côte d'Ivoire	1.71	Seychelles	3.61
Somalia	0.00	Tunisia	0.65	Maldives	1.72	Cuba	3.65
Bangladesh	0.00	Turkmenistan	0.77	Kenya	1.74	Cameroon	3.66
Mauritania	0.01	India	0.82	Lesotho	1.83	Cape Verde	3.72
Pakistan	0.02	Solomon Islands	0.86	Mongolia	1.96	Philippines (the)	3.75
Algeria	0.03	Equatorial Guinea	0.90	Israel	1.99	Ukraine	4.04
Nepal	0.08	Ethiopia	0.91	Ecuador	1.99	The form. Yugoslav Rep. of Mac.	4.12
Comoros	0.08	Togo	0.95	Dem. Republic of the Congo	2.01	Lebanon	4.13
Yemen	0.08	Papua New Guinea	1.01	Gambia (the)	2.27	Antigua and Barbuda	4.24
Indonesia	0.10	Malaysia	1.06	Honduras	2.28	Burkina Faso	4.38
Egypt	0.10	Djibouti	1.08	Congo	2.36	China	4.45
Niger (the)	0.11	Vanuatu	1.11	Namibia	2.39	Belize	4.50
Jordan	0.11	Benin	1.22	Georgia	2.41	Guam	4.50
Guinea	0.14	Armenia	1.23	Albania	2.51	Mexico	4.62
Sri Lanka	0.18	Oman	1.32	Nicaragua	2.53	Peru	4.68
Iraq	0.20	Viet Nam	1.35	Bahrain	2.63	Zimbabwe	5.08
Chad	0.23	Madagascar	1.38	Singapore	2.73	United Republic of Tanzania	5.29
Sudan (the)	0.27	Samoa	1.42	United Arab Emirates (the)	2.75	Brazil	5.32
Cambodia	0.36	Malawi	1.44	Guinea-Bissau	2.76	Botswana	5.38
Myanmar	0.36	Turkey	1.48	Kazakhstan	2.89	Costa Rica	5.45
Morocco	0.41	Uzbekistan	1.52	Angola	2.91	Kyrgyzstan	5.50
Tajikistan	0.41	Eritrea	1.54	Zambia	3.02	Dem. People's Republic of Korea	5.68
Qatar	0.44	Ghana	1.54	Liberia	3.12	Iceland	5.74
Senegal	0.48	Guatemala	1.64	Mauritius	3.16	Norway	5.81
Mali	0.49	Central African Republic (the)	1.66	Trinidad and Tobago	3.22	Suriname	5.82

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Country	Total	Country	Total	Country	Total
Guyana	5.84	Gabon	7.97	Hungary	11.92
Colombia	5.92	Belarus	8.12	Denmark	11.93
Chile	6.02	Canada	8.26	Spain	12.25
Panama	6.04	Thailand	8.47	Lithuania	12.32
Sao Tome and Principe	6.07	United States of America (the)	8.51	Slovakia	12.41
Dominican Republic (the)	6.11	Argentina	8.55	Portugal	12.49
Haiti	6.51	Bosnia and Herzegovina	8.62	Austria	12.58
Slovenia	6.55	Poland	8.68	Croatia	12.66
Saint Vincent and Grenadines	6.58	Venezuela	8.78	Germany	12.89
Sierra Leone	6.64	Italy	9.14	Bermuda	12.92
Paraguay	6.66	Australia	9.19	Reunion	13.39
Cyprus	6.67	Dominica	9.19	France	13.54
Barbados	6.70	Bahamas (the)	9.21	Republic of Moldova (the)	13.88
Lao People's Democratic Republic (the)	6.72	Greece	9.30	Ireland	14.45
Malta	6.74	Latvia	9.31	Czech Republic (the)	16.21
Rwanda	6.80	<i>Burundi</i>	9.33	Luxembourg	17.54
Sweden	6.86	<i>Swaziland</i>	9.51	<i>Uganda</i>	19.47
Azerbaijan	6.94	Netherlands (the)	9.74		
Uruguay	6.96	New Zealand	9.79		
Bulgaria	7.13	Estonia	9.85		
Japan	7.38	Netherlands Antilles	9.94		
Grenada	7.39	<i>Nigeria</i>	10.04		
Saint Kitts and Nevis	7.62	Belgium	10.06		
Romania	7.63	United Kingdom (the)	10.39		
French Polynesia	7.68	Finland	10.43		
Republic of Korea (the)	7.71	Saint Lucia	10.45		
South Africa	7.81	Russian Federation (the)	10.58		
New Caledonia	7.83	Switzerland	11.53		

*Sources:* FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations), World Drink Trends 2003

**Note:** Several African countries (Burundi, Nigeria, Swaziland and Uganda) appear in the list in the top 30 positions of adult per capita consumption. This is because the calculations were based on FAO data which included fermented beverages and estimates of beer produced locally from sorghum, millet and other agricultural products.

*Beverage preferences*

Looking a bit further into beverage preferences shows that countries often can be categorized as mainly beer, wine or spirits countries. Table 4 gives an example of beverage preferences among the different countries. It shows the top 20 countries with the highest consumption for each beverage category, using simply the recorded adult per capita (APC) in litres of pure alcohol for that specific beverage type. Among the mainly beer drinking countries are mostly European countries, and a few African. The largest wine drinkers are the wine producing countries of Europe. Most of the large spirits consuming countries are found in Eastern Europe, Asia and some island states.

*Table 4: Top 20 countries with highest beverage-specific adult per capita consumption*

Beer		Wine*		Spirits	
Country	APC	Country	APC	Country	APC
Czech Republic (the)	9.43	Luxembourg	9.43	Republic of Moldova (the)	10.94
Ireland	9.24	France	8.38	Reunion	8.67
Swaziland	7.49	Portugal	7.16	Russian Federation (the)	7.64
Germany	7.26	Italy	6.99	Saint Lucia	7.27
Austria	6.42	Croatia	6.42	Dominica	7.20
Luxembourg	6.16	Switzerland	6.23	Thailand	7.13
Uganda	6.14	Argentina	5.63	Bahamas (the)	7.05
Denmark	6.02	Spain	5.07	Latvia	6.62
The United Kingdom	5.97	Bermuda	4.95	Haiti	6.46
Belgium	5.90	Greece	4.78	Belarus	6.34
Venezuela	5.69	Denmark	4.57	Lao People's Democratic Republic	6.09
Lithuania	5.53	Austria	4.47	Bosnia and Herzegovina	6.03
Slovakia	5.34	Hungary	4.47	Saint Vincent and Grenadines	5.98
Australia	5.20	Uruguay	4.35	Dem. People's Republic of Korea	5.48
Croatia	5.16	Germany	3.38	Slovakia	5.44
Netherlands Antilles	4.96	Romania	3.37	Grenada	5.06
Netherlands (the)	4.91	Chile	3.25	Lithuania	4.92
Finland	4.89	French Polynesia	3.10	Azerbaijan	4.66
United Republic of Tanzania	4.85	Bulgaria	3.05	Kyrgyzstan	4.61
Gabon	4.77	Republic of Korea (the)	2.99	Czech Republic (the)	4.41

*\*Throughout the report, fermented beverages are included in the wine category. However, for this table only average wine has been used to present the countries with the highest adult per capita wine consumption. If the fermented beverages were included, countries such as Uganda, Nigeria, Burundi, Sierra Leone, Rwanda and Sao Tome and Principe would appear to be among the top 'wine' drinking countries.*

Changes in beverage preferences can be illustrated with the case of Europe where consumption of beer is increasing, consumption of wine is decreasing and consumption of spirits is rather stable as in Europe non-wine producing countries are opening up to wine, while wine-producing countries are opening up to other alcoholic beverages.

An example of a typology of wine consumption in Europe:

1. Wine producers with a high level of production, a high level of consumption, and decreasing consumption continually (France, Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain).

2. Wine producers with a medium level of production, a moderate level of consumption, and stable or slightly increasing consumption (Austria, the Czech Republic, Germany, and Switzerland).
3. Nonproducers, which have experienced a strong increase in wine consumption (Nordic countries, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Ireland and Belgium).

It should be noted that there are many different beverages outside the usual beer, wine and spirits categories, which are included in the per capita consumption figures. Alcohol can be produced from a wide range of agricultural products, such as grapes, barley, wheat, grains, fruit, and potatoes. On a country-wide basis dramatic increases or decreases in alcohol consumption are rare, with the exception of consumption associated with large natural disasters or conflicts. Where such changes appear in the data, they are more likely to reflect a change in the methods or that there has been a shift from legal alcohol production to illegal and unrecorded (or vice-versa). The report focuses on the three main beverage categories, although wherever possible data has been included on the more localized beverages, which were mostly included in the category of 'wine and fermented beverages'. Another example is the category of alcopops, which in most places are diluted spirits beverages and thus are usually included in the spirits category in the statistics.