

# Alcohol Related Harm and Mental Health

The danger begins with the first drop!

By Dr Yaw Amankwa Arthur  
Dep. Director, Health Promotion  
Mental Health Authority

# Outline

- ▶ Mention alcohol
- ▶ News about alcohol
- ▶ Explain addiction as a mental health issue
- ▶ Share data on alcohol use
- ▶ Alcohol related harm
- ▶ Should concern heighten in Ghana?
- ▶ Suggest interventions
- ▶ Conclusion

# What is alcohol?

Alcohol is a psychoactive substance with addictive potential, and dependence-producing substance

- ▶ The drink for all occasions - consumed to relieve stress, facilitate social interaction and foster good relations

# Good news but not so good!

- ▶ Consuming small amounts of alcohol aids in avoiding conditions such as diabetes, dementia, and cognitive decline.
- ▶ However, none of the key evaluation studies was able to tell us the “safest level of alcohol intake”.

# Alarming news!

- ▶ Several studies have declared that even modest alcohol use contributes to 60 acute and chronic health conditions.
- ▶ Others have indicated that alcohol intake is related to, in excess of 200 diseases, however the onset and severity of the disease will depend on quantity and quality of alcohol drank and frequency that underlie its consumption.

# What does WHO say ??

- ▶ When it comes to alcohol consumption- " there is no safe amount that does not affect health"
- ▶ New statement provides global affirmation that there is no evidence to suggest at what quantity the effects of alcohol begins to show in the human body.

# How does one get addicted to alcohol?

- ▶ As individuals maintain alcohol consumption over time, gradual changes may occur in the structure and function of their brains. These changes can compromise brain function and direct the transition from controlled, occasional use to chronic misuse, which can be difficult to control. The change can last long after a person stops consuming alcohol and can contribute to relapse in drinking.
- ▶ At this point, addiction has emerged - disease like any other disease
- ▶ Characterized by the 4Cs, that is Craving for the drug, Compulsion to use, loss of Control and Continuous use despite the negative consequences that emerges.
- ▶ Seeking professional help is critical.

# A Public Physical / Mental Health Concern

- ▶ Alcohol use disorder (AUD) is a medical condition characterized by an impaired ability to stop or control alcohol use despite adverse social, occupational, or health consequences.
- ▶ Likely explanatory factors suggested for the link between alcohol consumption and mental health problems are stigma and discrimination, problematic family functioning, sex, age, concomitant drug consumption, general wellbeing satisfaction and quality of life.
- ▶ What the data say?

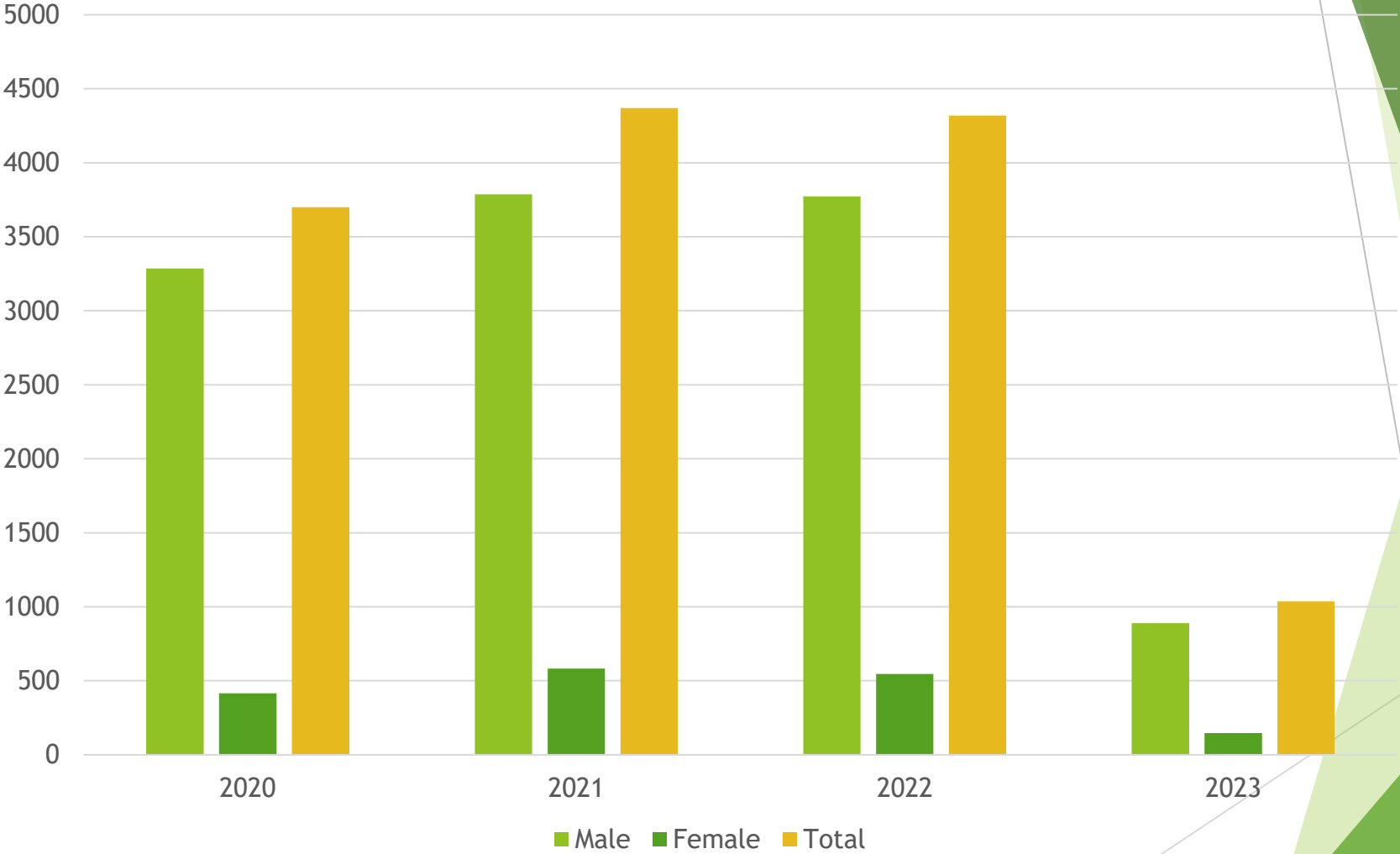


# Ghana NCD Alliance Reveals

## *Alcohol use in Ghana, A situational analysis, 2022*

- ▶ “About 9% of annual deaths among young people between the ages of 15 and 25 years are attributed to alcohol-related causes”.
- ▶ “In Ghana, the number of deaths occasioned by alcohol use disorders amongst the youth (between 15yrs and 39yrs) stood at approximately 40 in 2019”.
- ▶ “It is estimated that 89% of Ghanaian youth will become drinkers unless they are given the necessary education to change the situation”

# Mental Disorders due to Alcohol Use



# Alcohol related harm

## ▶ **RESULTS IN**

- ▶ self-harm,
- ▶ suicides
- ▶ interpersonal conflicts and violence,
- ▶ road accidents, traffic-related accidents and deaths,
- ▶ fetal injury,
- ▶ crime,
- ▶ sexually transmitted infections,
- ▶ unintentional injuries,
- ▶ tuberculosis,
- ▶ pneumonia

## **OUTCOMES**

- ❖ death,
- ❖ disease
- ❖ disability,
- ❖ strained relationships,
- ❖ functional / occupational difficulties
- ❖ and financial burden

# Should Concern Heighten in Ghana?

- ▶ A steady increase in alcohol production has also been observed in the country, together with a rise in alcohol-related harm / disorders
- ▶ Currently there about 136 alcohol beverages (bitters) registered by FDA. Others ?
- ▶ Concerns about fake alcoholic beverages on the market and its health effects
- ▶ Intensified promotional activities going on through adverts and targeting the youth and children irrespective of gender..
- ▶ Deliberate expansion of accessibility to alcohol.

# Policy for production/ sale / access to alcohol

- ▶ Taxation,
- ▶ Drink driving laws,
- ▶ Sale of alcohol to minors,
- ▶ Marketing licenses.

# What new interventions can be implemented ?

**A thorough systemic policy review from a public health perspective, using the World Health Organization's global strategy to reduce the harmful use of alcohol as the model .**

- ❖ Prioritize population surveillance, research and interventions.
- ❖ Inclusion of messages about the harmful nature of alcohol on the labels of alcoholic beverages.
- ❖ Effective policies on taxation - strengthen tax collection (products) for anti-alcohol promotional activities

# What new interventions can be implemented ?

- ❖ Tighter drink driving laws employing technology
- ❖ Stiffer sanctions for sale of alcohol to minors
- ❖ Marketing licenses -Banning certain promotional strategies
- ❖ Intensifying education about mental health issues and responsible alcohol consumption in educational institutions.

# Conclusion

Even though the alcohol industry contributes to economic growth, on the other hand it poses considerable health, social and political risk to the populations (Ghanaian). Therefore, policies that would address this imminent danger should choose tighter / stricter short to long term alcohol control strategies whilst ensuring a balance between economic development and public health.



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Thank  
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