

Eric Carlin
Director, SHAAP
(Scottish Health Action on Alcohol Problems)

Scottish Cancer Prevention Network Seminar
Edinburgh, 9th November 2012

**Alcohol and cancer – why we need to change and
how health professionals might help**



SHAAP

Established by Scottish Medical Royal Colleges in 2006. Our function:

To provide a coherent and authoritative medical voice on reducing the impact of alcohol on the health and wellbeing of the people of Scotland and to promote measures that can be adopted to reduce this harm.



Membership – SHAAP/SIGA

- **Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh**
- **Royal College of Psychiatrists of Scotland**
- **Royal College of Paediatrics & Child Health in Scotland**
- **Royal College of GPs in Scotland**
- **Royal College of Nursing**
- **ISD Scotland**
- **Royal College of Physicians & Surgeons of Glasgow**
- **Faculty of General Dental Practice**
- **Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh**
- **Royal College of Public Health**
- **Royal College of Emergency Medicine**

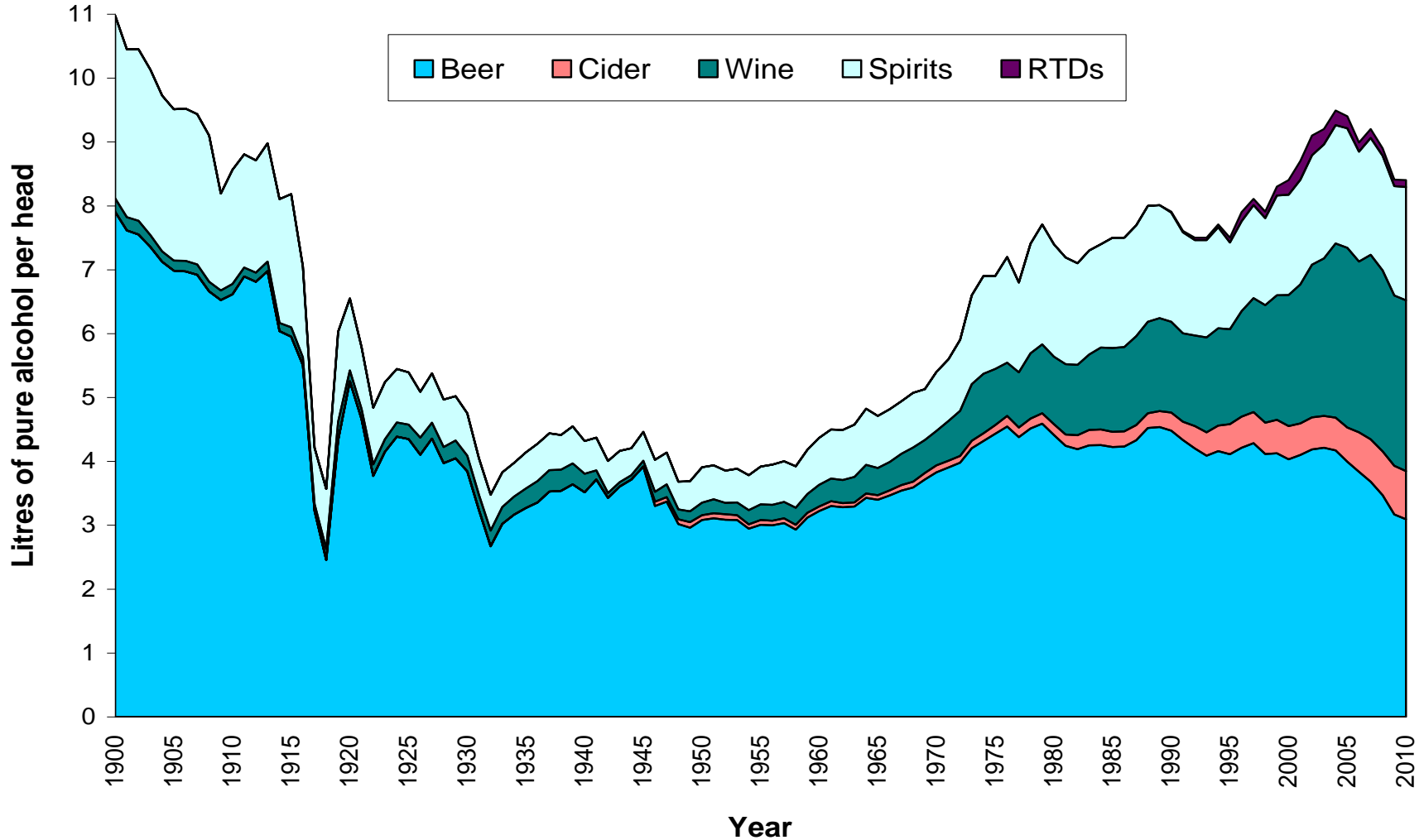
Aims

- **To raise awareness and understanding of alcohol-related health problems with health practitioners, policy makers and the public**
- **To evaluate current research and identify strategies to reduce alcohol-related health damage based on the best available evidence**
- **To work together with key organisations in the alcohol field in Scotland, the rest of the UK and worldwide in tackling alcohol misuse**

Activities

- **Review of evidence on price, consumption and alcohol-related harm**
- **Minimum unit pricing campaign**
- **Seminar and resource on Alcohol Brief Interventions**
- **Alcohol and Cancer workshop and publication**
- **Alcohol and Adolescent development**
- **Foetal Alcohol Harm**
- **Liver Disease and Transplantation**
- **Mental Health and Dementia**
- **Reviews and briefings**

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

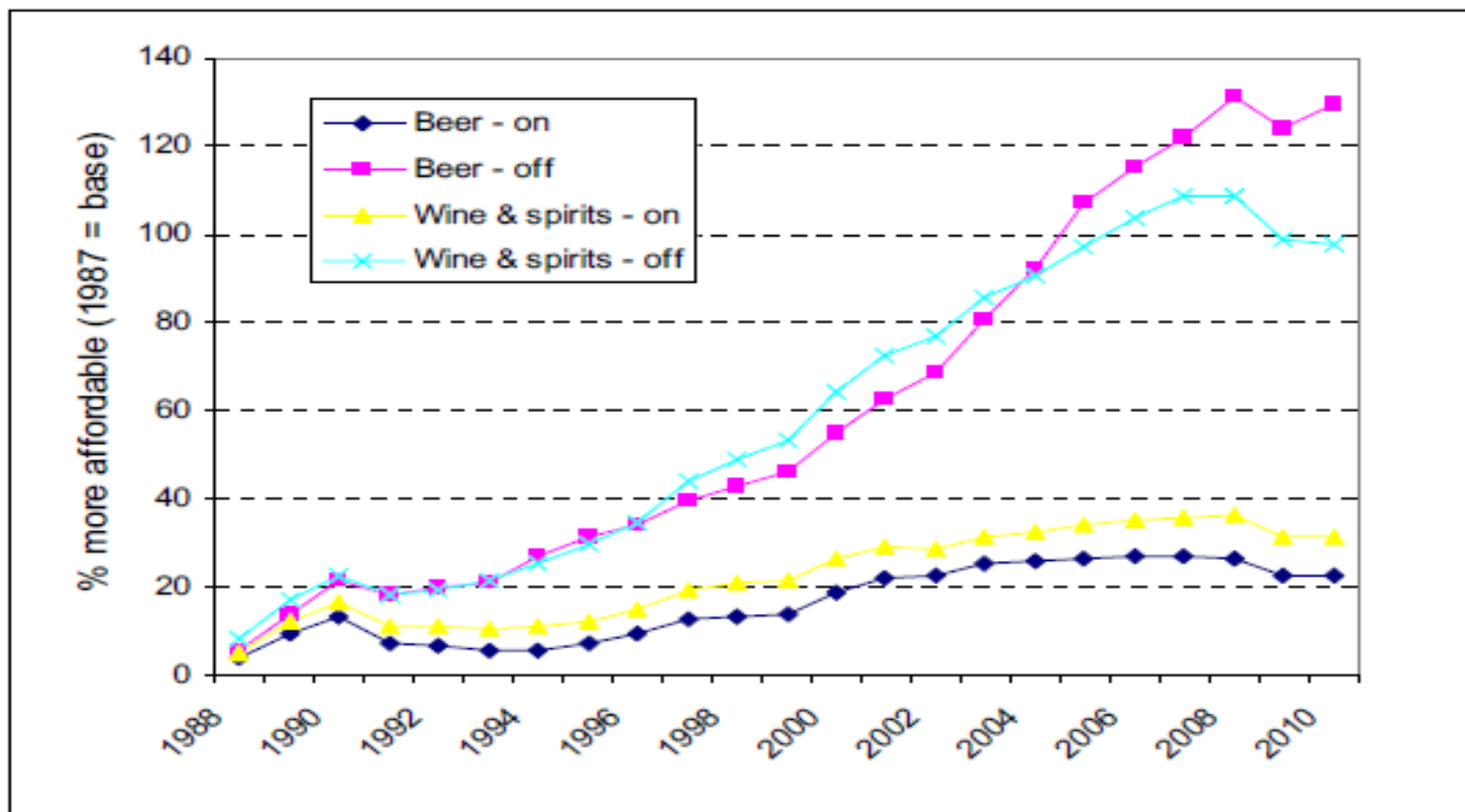


Sources: BBPA Statistical Handbook; Cancer Research UK



UK AFFORDABILITY TRENDS

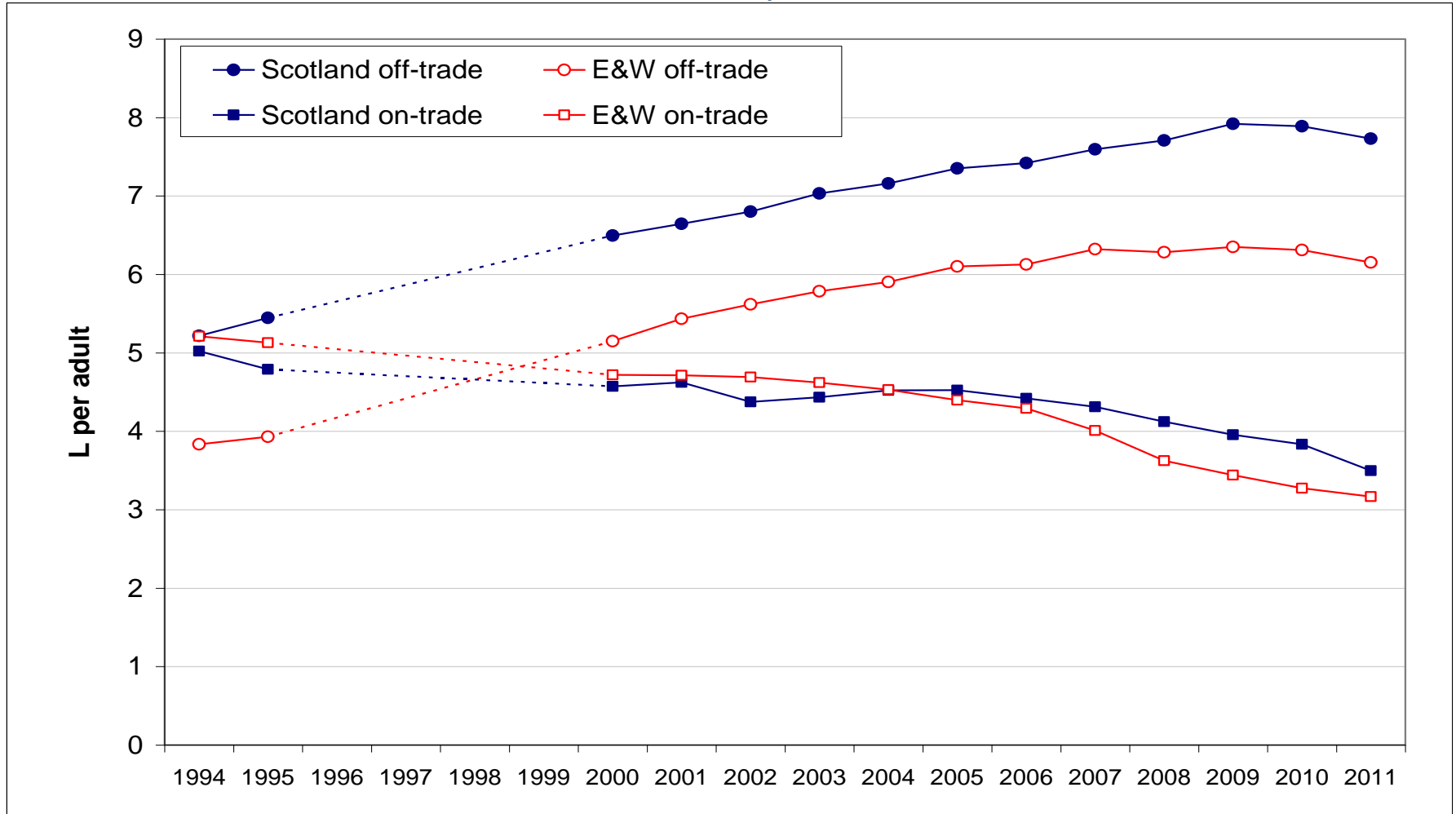
Figure 7: The Affordability of On and Off-Sales Alcohol: UK, 1987-2010



Health Scotland 2011

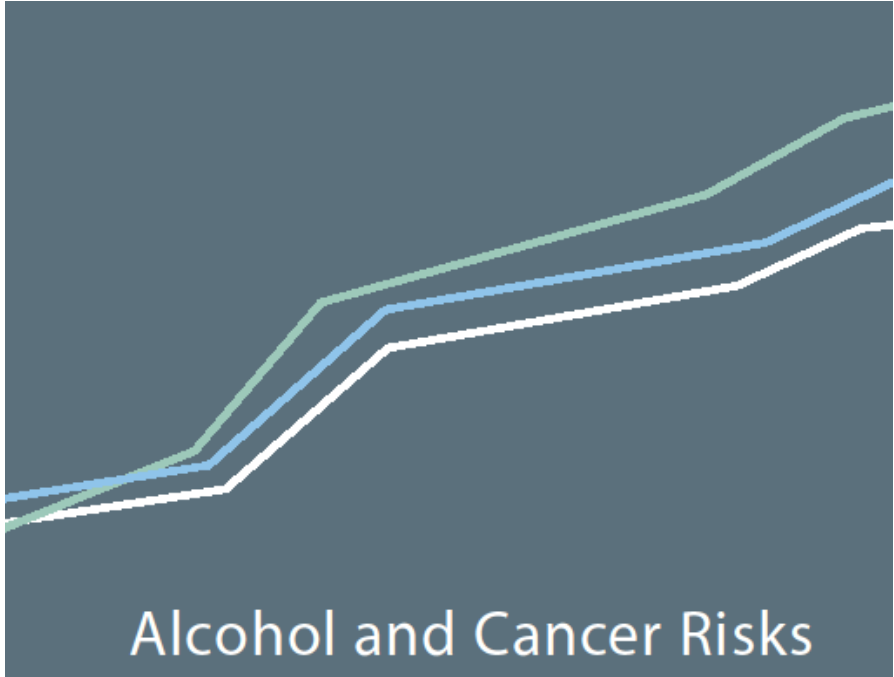


Litres of pure alcohol sold per adult (aged ≥ 16 years) in Scotland and England & Wales, by market sector, 1994-2011



Source: Nielsen/CGA





Alcohol and Cancer Risks

A Guide for Health Professionals

SHAAP

Scottish Health Action on Alcohol Problems
www.shaap.org.uk



**A change in
lifestyle can
reduce the
risk of cancer.**

Don't be afraid to
CHANGE.

You may lose
something good
but you may gain
something better.

QUOTEDIARY.ME

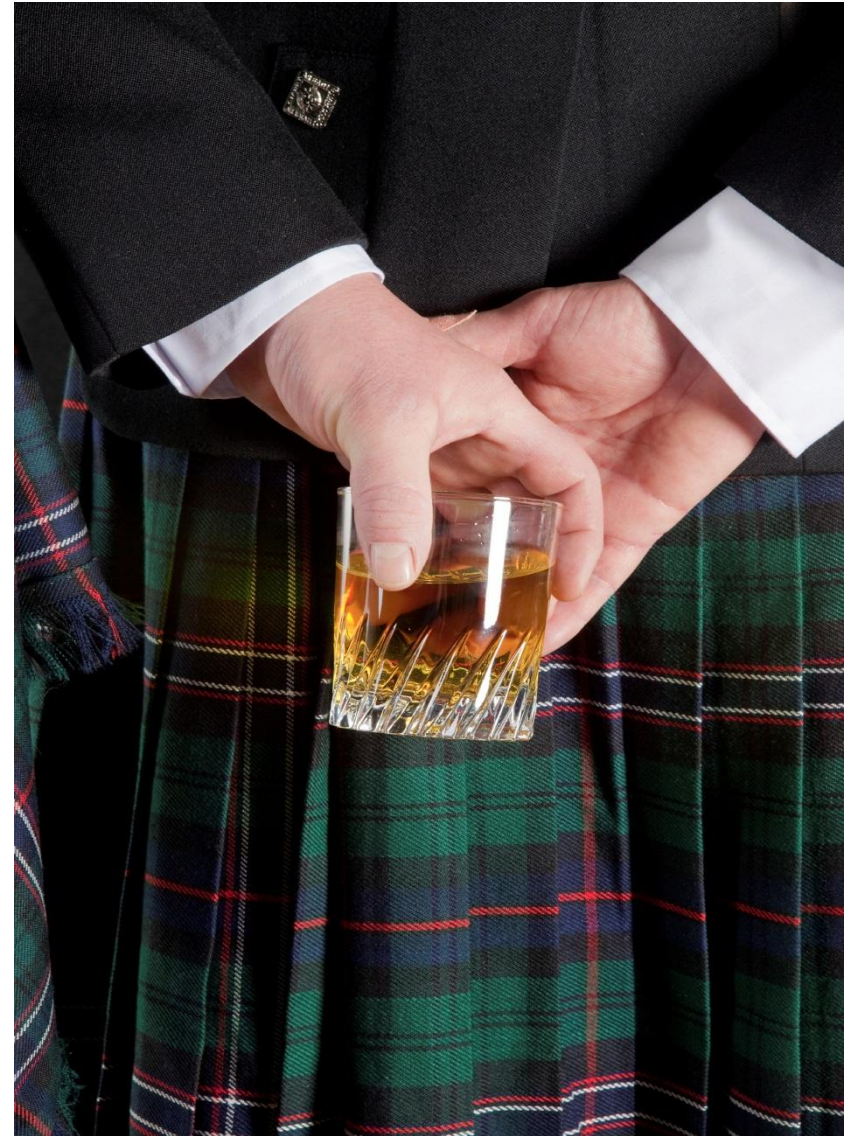
Many cancers are preventable

- **One third of cancers linked to lifestyle risk factors**
- **Half of Scottish population have three or more of these lifestyle risk factors**
- **46% of men and 38% of women drink alcohol at non-sensible levels**
- **Increased risk of cancer of the breast, head and neck, the oesophagus, bowel and liver**

- **Each year, approximately 6% of new cancer cases are estimated to be attributable to alcohol consumption.**
- **Drinking alcohol, even within the limits of current advice on sensible drinking, may increase the risks of alcohol-attributable oral and pharyngeal as well as breast cancer.**
- **Reducing alcohol consumption to levels within the current guidance for sensible drinking will reduce the risk of developing an alcohol-attributable cancer.**

In 2010, alcohol was an attributable risk factor in approximately 7%, or 1948 new cases, of cancer in Scotland.

The number of cancers in which alcohol was estimated to be an attributable risk factor is greater in women than men.



Multiple routes to cancer risk

Alcohol may cause cancers of oral cavity, pharynx, larynx, oesophagus and liver.

Ethanol metabolism generates acetaldehyde which reacts with DNA to form cancer-promoting compounds.

Some pathways of alcohol metabolism can damage DNA, inducing tumour development.

Other factors may increase tumour risk in chronic heavy drinkers

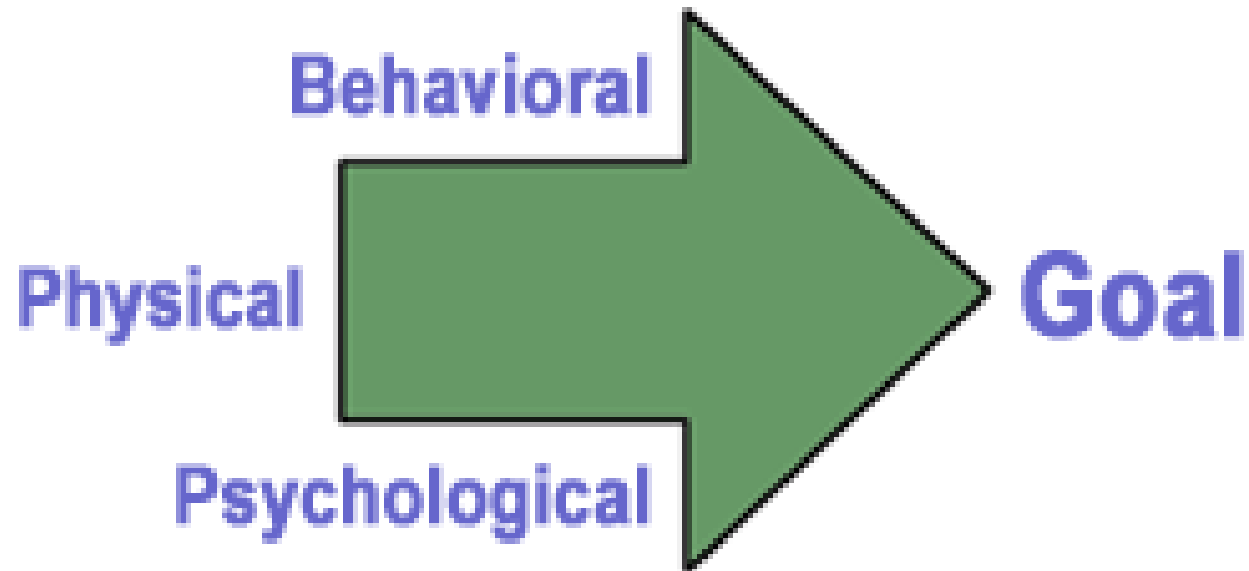
An increase in sex hormone concentrations (i.e. oestrogen) can explain a biological mechanism of the alcohol and breast cancer association.

The Role of Health Professionals

- **Build a trusting relationship**
- **Provide information appropriate to the person's understanding**
- **Work with and support families and carers.**



Lifestyle Change



Opportunities for interventions

Within current public health improvement programmes there are opportunities to raise the profile of messages focused on alcohol and cancer risk.

Current guidelines for sensible alcohol consumption are

Men: No more than 3 to 4 units a day and no more than 21 units in one week

Women: No more than 2 to 3 units a day and no more than 14 units a week

Strongly advised to have two days of abstinence to allow the body time to recover, particularly for those who drink heavily.



Alcohol Brief Interventions (ABIs)

Based on:

- assessment of drinking behaviour and feedback
- negotiation and agreement of goal for reducing alcohol use
- assisting clients with behaviour modification participation
- reinforcement with self-help materials
- follow up telephone support or further visits

For further information and support in delivery of ABIS

<http://www.healthscotland.com/topics/health/alcohol/alcohol-brief-interventionscommunications-and-guidance.aspx>

<http://www.healthscotland.com/topics/health/alcohol/local-delivery.aspx>



Thank you!

Eric Carlin

shaap.director@rcpe.ac.uk

www.shaap.org.uk

