To add European knowledge to alcohol policy and to disseminate this knowledge to those engaged in making policy
What is AMPHORA?

- 4 year Europe-wide project
- 50+ researchers, 30+ research institutions from all EU member states
- Project partners from 13 European countries

Coordinated by Hospital Clínic de Barcelona (HCB), Catalonia, Spain
AMPHORA is a collaborative project funded under the European Commission Seventh Framework Program (FP7).
AMPHORA will:

- Advance the state of the art in alcohol policy research and enhance cooperation among researchers in Europe.
- Provide new scientific evidence for the most effective public health measures to reduce the harm done by alcohol.
- Promote the translation of science into policy and disseminate new knowledge to policy makers.
Integrated policy making

Work package 2
Objectives

- A common framework for evaluating effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of interventions
- A tool to assess effectiveness and cost-effectiveness
- Enable comparison between interventions and across countries
- Estimate joint effects of multiple interventions
Social indicators

- No accepted social indicator for health or alcohol policy
- We propose a forum of all interested to start constructing such an indicator
- Cost-benefit considerations may serve in the interim
Contribution to alcohol policy

- Framework for evaluating European policies and programs
- Comparative analyses of effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of European alcohol policy measures
Socio-cultural, economic and demographic determinants of unplanned alcohol consumption changes and preventive alcohol policies

Work Package 3
What we already know:

Policy measures implemented since the ‘60s

TAXATION

AGE LIMITS

REGULATING ADVERTISING

LICENSING AND PRICING (AND STATE MONOPOLY)
Consumption trends

- Northern countries consumption has increased.
- Central and Eastern Europe both consumption and policies have shown little change.
- Latin European countries consumption has decreased although few policies were implemented.
Hypothesis

Changes in consumption, patterns and alcohol-related harm (1960-2010) result from:

implemented preventive policies

+ 

socio-cultural, economic & demographic determinants, (causing unplanned changes)
Research phases

- agree on indicators of unplanned alcohol consumption changes
- create a model to analyse data
- collect data of independent variables and link them to alcohol consumption and related harm at country level
- make comparison at country and European level
Contribution to alcohol policy

- Recommendations for a broader perspective within preventive efforts
  - incorporating cultural, economic, social and demographic factors into alcohol policies,

so that better and more cost-effective strategies are planned and implemented at the country level.
The impact of exposure to alcohol advertising and sponsorship on adolescents’ alcohol use
An European cross-national longitudinal study

Work package 4
What we already know

Young people who are more exposed to alcohol advertisements:

- Start drinking alcohol earlier;
- Drink more alcohol on single occasions (binge drink);
- Consume alcohol more frequently.
What we would like to know

- More evidence from European-based studies
- The mechanisms behind the impact of alcohol advertising
- Evidence of a dose response relationship between alcohol advertising exposure and juvenile drinking
Methodology

- Qualitative study with focus groups
- Longitudinal survey; 3 measurements
- 56 adolescents 13 – 15 years
- School-based survey
- 2500 respondents per country
- RAGI (Receptional Analytical Group Interviews)
- Finland, Italy, Netherlands, Poland, Germany
Focus of the study

Work Package 4

- Alcohol advertising on TV
- Alcohol sport sponsorship
- Alcohol branded promotional items
- Alcohol expectancies & attitudes

Alcohol use
Focus of the qualitative study

- How do alcohol commercials mediate the meaning of drinking behaviour?
- How do adolescents interpret and incorporate this meaning?
Study relevance

- First cross-national European longitudinal study;
- Comparing the impact of alcohol marketing across countries with diverse drinking and alcohol policy cultures;
- Examining mechanisms behind the impact of alcohol marketing on alcohol use.
Contribution to alcohol policy

- Provide more European evidence for policy makers
- Provide a better understanding of mechanisms behind the impact of alcohol advertising
- May stimulate effective alcohol marketing regulation and harmonization of regulations across Europe;
- Provide more evidence of dose-response relationship between alcohol advertising exposure and juvenile drinking
Economic and physical availability of alcohol

Work package 5
There is a substantial evidence base of systematic reviews and meta-analyses which show that policies that regulate the environment in which alcohol is marketed (particularly its price and availability) are effective in reducing alcohol-related harm.

Aim

- Analyze effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of measures to control alcohol availability in Europe
- Analyze their impact on reducing alcohol related harm.

TAXING AND PRICING

RESTRICTIONS ON PHYSICAL AVAILABILITY
What will be analyzed

- Recent and planned control measures and changes
- Alcohol availability controls *not previously studied*
To identify

- important changes in measures affecting availability
- major changes in consumption levels or drinking habits
- major changes in alcohol related harm

and the association between these.
Methodologies

- Literature review
- Example country “case studies”: of recent and planned control measures provided by networks and colleagues.
The proposed methodology

- Will provide a concise overview of studied and unstudied major changes in measures affecting economic and physical availability in Europe
- Allows us to review and study how these changes have affected alcohol consumption and related harm in different European countries.
Contribution to alcohol policy

- Identification of new cases of the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of changes in measures to control availability and their impact on alcohol related harm.
- A strengthened knowledge base of the potential of alcohol control measures to affect alcohol related harm.
Early identification and management
The public health impact of brief interventions for alcohol use disorders in 6 European countries
Workpackage 6
What we already know

Screening and brief interventions (SBI)
- Effective and cost-effective for hazardous and harmful drinking
- Most evidence is in primary care
- Some treatment interventions effective and cost-effective for alcohol dependence
- Where evaluated access to treatment limited in most countries
- Therefore public health impact of individually directed interventions in limited
What we would like to know

- The public health impact of SBI in Europe
- How can the impact be improved?
- How available are SBI and treatment in health settings in Europe?
- What is the impact of policy measures on availability?
- How cost-effective are alcohol interventions in Europe?
Hypotheses

- Alcohol policy impacts on the availability of interventions
- Staff attitudes and training are related to uptake of SBI
- Currently, availability of interventions is not needs-based
- Alcohol interventions implemented in Europe are effective and cost-effective
Methodology

- Descriptive study of alcohol intervention systems in 6 (+5) European countries
- National survey of alcohol service providers
- Study of prevalence of alcohol use disorders
- Impact and cost-effectiveness of interventions
Expected outcomes

- Comparative data on alcohol intervention policy measures and implementation in 11 countries
- Comparative alcohol needs assessment in 6 countries
- Comparative data on impact and cost-effectiveness of alcohol interventions in Europe
Contamination of Alcohol in Europe
Work package 7 (i)
What we already know

- Contaminated alcohol has chronic and acute toxic effects
- Some European countries have anomalously high rates of death attributable to liver cirrhosis.
- The same countries have high levels of unrecorded alcohol consumption
- Some successful past policy measures: e.g. prohibition of methanol to denature alcohol
Hypotheses

- Compounds in unrecorded alcohol = health risk above the risk of ethanol alone
- Compounds other than ethanol can explain disproportionate mortality that cannot be due to volume/patterns of drinking alone in certain countries
- Ethanol may be in higher concentrations in unrecorded alcohol
- Combined effects of other compounds with ethanol
What is unrecorded alcohol?

- ‘Unrecorded’: any kind of alcohol not taxed as beverage alcohol or registered in the jurisdiction where it is consumed
- E.g, homemade products, surrogate alcohol (not intended for human consumption), illegally produced alcohol

2002 estimate: 30% of global alcohol is unrecorded
Methodology

- Sampling of unrecorded alcohol in all EU countries
- Chemical analysis for a diverse range of compounds
- Validated spectroscopic and chromatographic methods
First results from pilot studies

- Generally: most samples were OK
- Ethanol: Regularly in higher concentrations than in recorded spirits (i.e. > 40% vol)
- Ethyl carbamate: in certain fruit spirits in Hungary, Poland & Romania (also in legal fruit spirits)
- Flavorings (e.g. hepatotoxic coumarin): in cosmetic surrogate alcohol in Lithuania
- Diethyl phthalate: in surrogate alcohol from Lithuania
Contribution to alcohol policy

- Recommendations for banning unsuitable compounds used to denature alcohol
- Ethyl carbamate contamination in fruit spirits should be reduced (recorded and unrecorded).
- Recommendations for maximum limits which should be implemented into the European law with priority.
- Further measures might range from legalizing unrecorded with subsequent quality control to instructing the producers of unrecorded how to avoid the problems detected.
Open public call for samples

AMPHORA is currently seeking samples of unrecorded alcohol from all European countries including neighbouring countries. Please contact AMPHORA if you want to provide samples from your country.

info@amphoraproject.net
Identifying environmental factors in alcohol-related harm in European bars and nightclubs

Work package 7 (ii)
What we already know

- Alcohol-related harm is common in drinking settings
- International research shows bar characteristics can contribute to harm
- Environmental changes can help reduce alcohol-related problems

*Homel and Graham, 2009*
What we would like to know

- Do international findings apply to European settings?
- What are the key environmental factors linked to alcohol-related harm in European bars and nightclubs?
- Are these consistent across countries?
- What environmental changes could help reduce alcohol-related harm in Europe?
Study in 4 European Cities

Liverpool (UK)

Utrecht (Netherlands)

Palma (Spain)

Ljubljana (Slovenia)
Methods

- Literature Review
- Interviews with stakeholders
  - Police
  - Health services
  - Licensing authorities
  - Local authorities
- Data collection
  - Crime
  - Emergency Department
  - Bar density
Methods

- Research tool development
- Observational research in bars and nightclubs
  - 15 bars/nightclubs per city
  - Multiple visits at peak times
  - Assessment tool
- Alcohol measures in nightlife
  - Short questionnaire
  - Breath test
Contribution to alcohol policy

- Greater understanding of environmental and behavioural differences across European nightlife
- Greater understanding of environmental influences on alcohol-related harm in Europe
- Recommendations for safer European drinking environments
- Informing regulatory approaches to manage licensed premises
- Fill major gap in European alcohol evidence base
Public perceptions of alcohol-related harm
Work package 8 (i)
To determine the impact of public perceptions of alcohol and alcohol-related harm on the implementation and outcome of measures to reduce alcohol-related harm across different European cultures
Methodology

- Interview questionnaire
- Seven countries
- Random sample of 500 per country
- Aged 16 years or older
Methodology

- Three dimensions of “alcohol abuse”
  - frequency
  - degree of intoxication
  - social context

- 18 statements with 3 categories
  - “Abuse”
  - “Not abuse”
  - “Uncertain”
Contribution to alcohol policy

- Greater understanding of public perceptions of harmful alcohol use
- Evidence for how public perceptions influence the effectiveness of policy measures to reduce alcohol-related harm in different European countries
AMPHORA
Infrastructures for Alcohol Policy
Work package 8 (ii)
What we already know

- Every EU country has laws and other policies that set alcohol apart from other goods, often for reasons of public health.
- Countries differ in institutions, structures and professional development for the implementation of alcohol policy.
What we already know

- HP-Source.net
  - an international collaboration of researchers, practitioners and policy makers contains:
    - databases mapping infrastructure, policies and practice
    - data for a range of alcohol policy and prevention measures
    - data for overall comprehensive alcohol policy
What we would like to know

- Extend data collection to *all* policy measures for all Member States, Iceland, Norway, and Switzerland
- Map design and availability of alcohol policy and preventive infrastructures
- Analyse impact of infrastructure on alcohol policy across Europe
Methodology

- Country partners will collect, update and expand the existing information
- Data analysis
  - summarized through web diagrams illustrating the availability of infrastructures throughout Europe
  - analyzed for relation to successful implementation of public health measures to reduce harm done by alcohol
Contribution to alcohol policy

- Completed data on alcohol policy infrastructures, policies and practices entered onto HP-Source.net
- Report mapping alcohol policy infrastructures across Europe and their impact on the success of alcohol policy across Europe
Can we scale and measure alcohol policies?

Work package 8 (iii)
Objective

- To quantify strictness of comprehensiveness of alcohol policy according to subgroups of alcohol control
- To examine differences in alcohol policy between countries
Methodology

- Detailed data will be collected on formal alcohol policy measures
  - From all 27 member states,
  - All candidate and potential candidate countries,
  - Iceland, Norway, and Switzerland.
Methodology

- Data mainly collected from the European Alcohol Information System (EAIS)
- Also from
  - EC/WHO project
  - Previous European studies
  - Data provided by contact persons in the countries.
Methodology

- Data summarized in a matrix of different alcohol policy measures by country
- Each alcohol policy category is divided into subcategories
Methodology

Policy subcategories

- Control of production and wholesale
- Control of distribution
- Personal control (age limits)
- Control of marketing
- Social and environmental controls (BAC limit)
- Public policy
- Alcohol taxation

Scale constructed in the Bridging the Gap project (Karlsson & Österberg, 2007)
Strengths of the proposed methodology

- Gives a concise overview of various alcohol policy measures in different countries.
- An easy instrument for comparing countries
- Allows ranking countries by strictness / comprehensiveness of alcohol policies (with caution!)
- Allows us to illustrate policy evolution over a long time
- Helps identify turning points and major changes in countries’ alcohol policies.
Weaknesses of the proposed methodology

- Cannot (in practice) be totally comprehensive.
- Difficult, if not impossible, to measure qualitative data on alcohol policies with the help of a quantitative scale.
- Cannot measure in a objective way how effectively different laws and regulations are enforced.
- Measures alcohol control on a national level.
Contribution to alcohol policy

- Updated overview of alcohol policies in several countries
- The scale can be used both as
  - a versatile instrument in gathering and categorising basic knowledge on alcohol policies from different European countries
  - an indicator of the strictness or comprehensiveness of alcohol policies.
Contribution to alcohol policy

- Combined with earlier data the scale can study trends to track changes in alcohol policies in different countries.
- Allows us to study changes in alcohol policy subgroups over time.
- Information can be a base for conducting similar studies in the future, with the aim to describe and analyze upcoming trends in alcohol policy measures and policy trends in certain countries.
From science to policy
Work package 9
Four objectives

- Database of cost-effective measures and interventions to guide integrated policy making
- Disseminate findings amongst the scientific community
- Ensure findings support the work of implementation of the European Commission’s communication on alcohol
- Translate findings into conclusions and recommendations for alcohol policy makers and the public.
Database of measures and interventions

A database of

- scientific evidence for alcohol policy
- country based laws and regulations on alcohol policy.
Bringing science and policy together

- Two expert and counterpart meetings in 2010 and 2011
- European Alcohol Policy conference in 2012.
- Outcomes disseminated through
  - publications in peer reviewed journals
  - a database of cost-effective measures
  - project web site
  - participation in relevant workshops, conferences and networks.