European Debate on Evidence-based Alcohol Policy

Working group Managing drinking environments

Standards in Bar Management

IREFREA

Montse Juan / Amador Calafat / Mariàngels Duch

Irefrea@irefrea.org

Why is it important to create standards?

- The EMCDDA has defined standards as «generally accepted principles or sets of rules for the best/most appropriate way to implement an intervention»

- Standards provide tools to professionals and policy makers for selecting the best practices

Preparation of health and safety standards for venues

- **Literature review:** scientific background on risk behaviour related to recreational context and drug use/abuse and interventions.

- **Selection of standards:** information collected and organized around 3 main entries:
  - Conditions of the venue
  - Managerial approaches and staff training
  - Alcohol pricing and availability

  →**Broken down into key components for assessment**

Assessment of the standards

- information collected in questionnaires from key participants:

Sample 89 Q	Industry representatives (80%)
	Other key stakeholders (20%)

located in:

From	25 European cities
	14 European countries

Assessment of the standards

- **Evaluation of the standards:** made by comparing ...

- **'effectiveness'** (evidence shown in literature)
- **'implementation'** (industry acceptability)

Results on bar management

Organized around **6 main standards**:

- No selling of alcohol to those under the legal age
- Staff training and management factors
- Involvement of key stakeholders and collaboration with police
- Create a safe physical environment
- Promote a safe social environment
- Regulation of alcohol sale and promotions

Results on bar management

Data from **industry representatives**:

- Representatives of umbrella organizations
- Managers of clubs and discos
- Promoters

1. No selling of alcohol to those under the legal age

Preventing underage access to alcohol is a core element of harm reduction in drinking environments.

Research data:
✓ Industry representatives rate **underage checkouts**:

- **Key element** to ensure health and safety (80.70%)
- **Easy implementation** (63.24%)
- **High effectiveness** (55.24%)
- **Low to medium cost** of implementation (88.69)

✓ However **just 68.4% carry them out** and <u>in most cases</u>:

- They are **not done routinely** but at door staff discretion

- Across all countries explored **no established set of protocols** for checking proof of identification were found

2. Staff training and management factors

A venue's staff is an integral part of the environment of any licensed premises. Their behavior and attitudes impact greatly on the social environment and atmosphere.

Research data:

✓ **82.1%** of the industry representatives sought report their **staff has undertaken server training.**

✓ Just **58.9%** states **training includes RBS** but does **not include any certification**

✓ On **door supervisors and security staff training**, with the exception of the UK and several regions in Spain, **no specific training is required**.

However:

✓ The fact that they rank staff training:
  - Low as a key component
  - **Big discrepancies** among informants on 'ease of implementation', 'cost' and 'acceptability'

✓ Seems to indicate the **presence of a number of divergent approaches** to the training.

3. Involvement of key stakeholders and collaboration with police

The involvement of key stakeholders, through the creation of working collaboration groups with other agencies, to tackle problems and find solutions from a broader perspective, enhances the success of interventions.

Research data:

✓ **57.1%** of all the industry stakeholders state they **work in collaboration with other stakeholders a**nd **82.1% collaborate with the police** - but in most cases these **collaborations were not formalised.**

Still:

✓ In those **cities in the UK where collaboration** with the polices **is specified as part of licensing,** coalitions are rated as:

- Rather difficult to constitute (60%)
- With low acceptability (70%)
- Despite the fact that are rated as a key element (60%)

✓ On the contrary, in **other countries explored** where there is little collaboration, **'implementation' is rated as difficult just by 31%** of the industry respondents.

✓ Across studied countries, this **collaboration goes from clear established protocols to eventual calls to the police** when problems arise.

4. Create a safe physical environment

Evidence suggests that by improving the physical conditions of a venue, health and safety conditions for clients and staff are also enhanced.

While certain characteristics of the drinking environment itself, independent of drinkers' behaviour, also predict the likelihood of disorderly behaviour. These include:

- Overcrowding and bumping
- Smokiness
- Poor lighting and ventilation
- High noise levels and loud music
- Obstacles restricting patrons movement
- Competition for access or service in bar or toilet areas.

CH Research data:

- ✓ Between **75% and 95%** of industry representatives informed that they **have procedures** to:
  - Control room temperature and ventilation
  - Ensure cleanliness and maintenance are kept
  - Carry out random check of toilets
  - CCTV monitoring
  - Signs with policy statements to inform clients of the house rules

- ✓ Just **44.7%** of industry representatives **deploy a glassware policy.**

5. Promote a safe social environment

The degree of overall 'permissiveness' in an establishment has been identified as one of the four main factors that increase rates of aggression and violence.

- Certain characteristics of management have been shown to be predictors to increase rates of problem behaviours from clients:

    - Over-permissive atmosphere
    - Serving drunk or under-age customers
    - Allowing drug use and/or other illegal activities

CH Research data:

✓**76.8%** of industry representatives sought **use signs with codes of conduct**; **73.9%** informed that the **level of permissiveness** in their venue was **controlled. Almost all** of the industry informants (98.2%) **report that intoxicated patrons are identified** ; although **other participants disagreed** (54.5% reported that this was not being done in venues).

✓**The fact that:**
   - Just 58.9% of industry respondents reported RBS training
   - Often handling of patrons is done by security staff (whom just 20% of the industry informants reported as being trained

✓ Might be a **problem for effectively managing the flow of people and intervening before problems arise**.

6. Regulation of alcohol sale and promotions

Research findings suggest that high concentrations of alcohol outlets, longer opening hours and cheap alcohol prices can all contribute to increases in alcohol-related problems.

This evidence should be used to revise actual control measures to prevent the development of drinking environments that contribute to alcohol related harm.

- Limit special drinks promotions
- Limit happy hours
- Limit hours of service
- Enforce a responsible beverage service
- Legislate minimum drink prices
- Limit outlet density

CH Research data:

- ✓ Most of the industry representatives stated that **availability of alcohol is regulated by law** (Greece and Belgium enjoy free trading) and **57.2% declared it is legally enforced** (by a licensing authority and/or police).

- ✓ **89.7% of industry respondents** answered **pricing should not be regulated by law**.

- ✓ **And about 88% of industry representatives** affirm special **promotions should not be regulated by law**.

As a summary

In general, **industry representatives**:

- Are **aware of the risk and protective factors** shown by literature

- State a **high observance** on most of the key health and safety standards (enforced or not) although **compliance** has not been check.

- Use **key components as an added value** (to stand out from competition)

- Apply them discretionally **according to their interests/needs**

- Express **doubts on further regulation** (paperwork/costs)

As a summary

But, the **question that remains open** is:

- **How to guaranty consistency on interventions and procedures if they are not enforced?**

Experiences in regulated countries show that **to ensure standard quality:**

- ✓ Venues must **provide evidence (and record)** of the strategies implemented
- ✓ Trainings have to be **certified by the responsible licensing agency**
- ✓ Voluntary policies **unless mandatory or combined with enforcement are not very effective**

→ **Therefore, regulating and enforcing the standards highlighted both by literature and industry should be a priority to ensure homogenization in practices working towards health and safety in nightlife premises.**

Thank you !

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Montse Juan

irefrea@cop.es