



**College of Psychiatrists
of Ireland**

Wisdom • Learning • Compassion

**Submission to the Working Group on Regulating Sponsorship by Alcohol
Companies of Major Sporting Events, Department of the Taoiseach
Prepared by the CPsychI Faculty of Addiction Psychiatry**

June 2014

The College of Psychiatrists of Ireland has been calling for a ban on alcohol advertising and sponsorship since 2008. The rationale for this position was outlined in our report *'Calling time on alcohol advertising and sponsorship in Ireland'*. Since 2008, the evidence indicating that sponsorship of sport by alcohol companies is associated with increased alcohol related harm for children and adolescents has grown. Therefore we continue to call for such a ban and welcome the fact that Government is giving active consideration to this measure as part of a comprehensive range of actions in the draft Public Health (Alcohol) Bill.

Alcohol is certainly not all bad. As psychiatrists we do however get to witness all that is bad about alcohol.

In addition to treating people with alcohol dependence, we also work with patients whose abuse of alcohol greatly hampers the treatment of their co-existing depressive, anxiety or other mental health disorder. We are acutely aware of the increased risk of suicide which alcohol brings to these patients. Both our National Office for Suicide Prevention (NOSP, 2012) and our National Suicide Research Foundation (Arrensman et al, 2013) have also called for action on alcohol in view of its established link with deliberate self-harm and suicide. In addition to encountering the harm which alcohol does to individual drinkers, we also witness the damage it inflicts those around the drinker. To our great shame as a society we have tended to ignore this huge issue of harm to others due to alcohol, attaching too much reverence to the notion that individual adults should be permitted to drink as much as they want without external interference by society (Hope 2014).

We work with children who are traumatised by years of abuse and neglect at the hands of parents with alcohol problems. We see young men with devastating neuropsychiatric problems after being the victim of random and unprovoked drunken assaults, their lives changed forever by someone else's one silly moment of 'high spirits'. We work with parents, some elderly and some not so elderly, who live in fear for the arrival home of their angry son in the early hours of Saturday morning after his night out 'having the craic'. We treat depressed women who

feel trapped in difficult relationships punctuated by alcohol fuelled domestic violence, while their anxious children attend child mental health services.

Alcohol related harm can not be eliminated. Yet it can certainly be reduced. Indeed we should take optimism from the fact that some of the steps we have taken in recent years have already reduced the damage. Alcohol consumption fell slightly last year following small tax increases. Alcohol related road traffic fatalities fell following the legislation for random breath testing.

Alcohol has a place in our culture and perhaps one of our greatest challenges is to reposition it within that culture. One step that will certainly assist in that journey towards a cultural shift would be the ending of the practice of literally selling our culture to alcohol. Sport, music and the arts all constitute absolutely key pillars of our culture. We cannot continue selling them to alcohol brands if we truly want to modify our relationship with alcohol.

Key points within this submission:

- The drinks industry routinely declares that the **goal of sponsorship** and all other promotional activities is to **increase brand awareness** and to generate brand switching among adults. It has many other goals including building political connections and media influence.
- Sports sponsorship allows industry to **bypass statutory regulation** of other promotional activities such as advertising.
- Sports sponsorship constitutes the primary promotional activity for the big beer brands.
- The **CEOs and Boards** of alcohol companies with large sport sponsorship deals, given their responsibility to their international shareholders, must be **persuaded by evidence that it works** and gives a return on investment directly linked to increased sales of brands and hence company profit. Otherwise why do it and how could they justify it?
- Evidence indicates that sports sponsorship by alcohol companies is integrated with other promotional activities in a very sophisticated manner. **We need to limit other promotional activities too for effective enduring impact**, and these other activities are also addressed in the proposed Public Health (Alcohol) Bill.
- The main battleground for drinks manufacturers relates to the 18-24 year-old age. However, the industry is always looking ahead and must do so if it wants to maintain and build market share. It is the current cohort of 11-17 year olds who are being fought over by alcohol producing companies who are looking ahead to 2021, as it is they who will be the 18-24 year olds of 2021.
- Whether deliberately targeted at children and adolescents or not, it is certain that sponsorship activity is reaching this vulnerable group with large numbers owning alcohol branded products. Evidence from television advertising in the UK indicates that **children see more alcohol adverts on television than adults**.

- An average of **1.24 visual references to alcohol brands per minute during broadcasts** was shown by a study conducted during EURO 2012. Matches are typically played during day time and thereby **expose children** to enormous number of **messages linking alcohol and sport**.
- Sportsmen and women who play for clubs in receipt of any form of alcohol sponsorship drink more heavily than those who play in clubs without any such sponsorship.
- **Drinks companies do not sponsor sport to facilitate sporting involvement** by ordinary citizens and, as was the case with the Tobacco industry, the alcohol industry has no particular interest in the sports with highest participation in the country. Drinks manufacturers are **interested primarily in highly visible, televised sporting success** and excellence.
- The **money goes to the sports with the largest television viewing audiences** - soccer, rugby and Gaelic games. The sport with the highest participation across the population, swimming, obtains no money from the alcohol industry as far as we know.
- **Other countries**

The regulatory approaches in France and Norway appear to have worked well. Both have been in place for over 15 years. Each has been subjected to multiple legal challenges in national and international courts, all of which failed.

France: Courts have vindicated the right of the French government to prioritise the health and wellbeing of its citizens over the commercial rights of the alcohol industry.

Australia: Four years **after** a complete **tobacco sponsorship ban** came into effect (1996) sports sponsorship **revenue had doubled from 350 million to 700 million dollars** per annum. Sponsorship value had been exaggerated - **only 50% of the tobacco industry money** spent on sponsorship was actually **paid to the sporting bodies** with the other 50% used to promote and broadcast their sponsorship of the sport.

- The sporting bodies have indicated that a ban on alcohol sponsorship would put them at a competitive disadvantage, making both participation in and hosting of international sporting competitions very difficult. France have featured in two world soccer cup finals as well as being the top performing European rugby team since alcohol sponsorship became illegal in that country. They have also hosted both the Soccer World Cup and the Rugby World Cup since the loi Evin.
- Increased allocation of funding to sporting bodies from **higher alcohol taxation** would result in a more equitable distribution of revenue. Swimming and basketball have high levels of participation and are very worthy of financial support, but attract little sponsorship because they have a minimal presence on TV schedules.
- The stated goal of the Irish Government in the Healthy Ireland Framework is the reduction of alcohol consumption to 9.2 litres of pure alcohol per person aged 15 years. Given a goal of reducing alcohol

consumption, it would seem illogical to continue to permit the drinks industry to apply its foot to one of the accelerators of consumption, this being sports sponsorship.

Below we have sought to address each of the questions posed in the consultation document:

Q1. Is it possible to distinguish clearly between sports sponsorship and other sports-related marketing\advertising activities?

As the Chairman of the Board and President of the Anheuser-Busch Companies said, when describing the marketing strategy of what has become the world's largest brewer: *“Advertising is joined by sales promotion, merchandising, field sales, sales training, and sports programming, enabling us to market not only on a national plane, but also at the grass-roots level”* (McBride and Mosher, 1985).

The sponsorship of sport forms just one important element of the deliberately integrated and highly sophisticated marketing campaigns undertaken by alcohol manufacturers to promote consumption of their brand. One of the advantages of sports sponsorship from an industry perspective is that it allows the industry to bypass regulation of other promotional activities (Lavack, 2003). While alcohol advertisements may be made subject to statutory regulation via the Public Health (Alcohol) Bill, advertisements and promotions of sporting events sponsored by alcohol companies, with the adverts funded by the drinks company, will not be subject to such regulations. The Tobacco industry used this loophole following restrictions imposed on its ability to advertise its products directly (Lavack, 2003). As stated by British American Tobacco in the 1990s, “In advertising-restricted markets, sponsorships often provide brand communications opportunities which are otherwise not available.....”

The photograph below (Figure 1) provides a perfect example of this. This is a picture of a sporting legend surging towards the try line. It is not a drinks advertisement as such and is therefore not subject to the any current or future alcohol advertising guidelines/legislation which prohibits alcohol brands from being associated with sporting success. However, the picture (which was very possibly provided by Heineken to the newspaper if they are following tobacco industry strategies [Lavack, 2003]) links an alcohol brand with a sporting icon doing what he does best, framed by two large Heineken logos.

Figure 1.



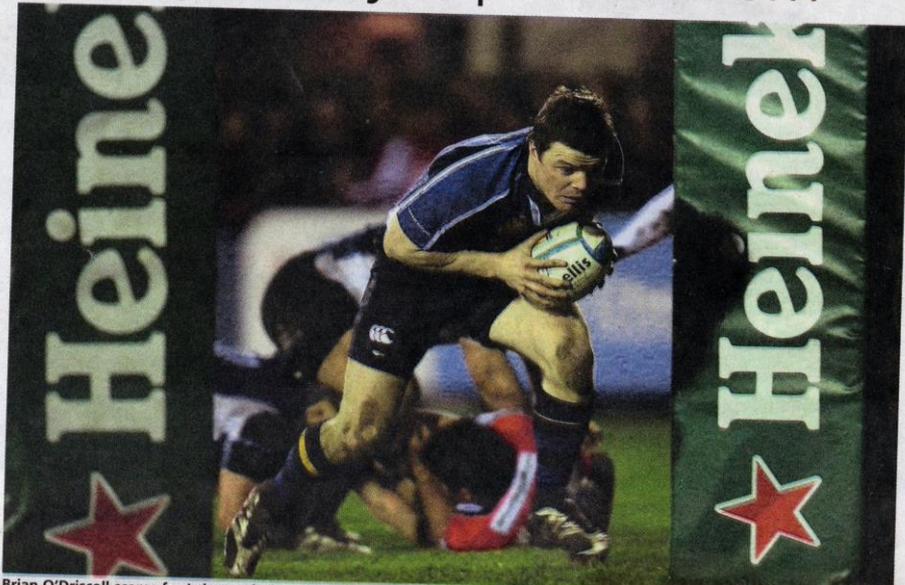
Heineken profits fizz by 87pc to €778m

HEINEKEN, which sells beer in more than 170 countries, said yesterday that profit in the second half of 2006 rose by 87pc to €778m – partly on the back of increased beer sales in Russia, where Heineken has become the third-largest beer company.

In Ireland, the company said that our increasing preference for lager allowed Heineken Ireland to increase its share of the market to 21.6pc, from 20.3pc in 2005.

As well as the eponymous lager, Heineken produces a wide range of beers including Murphy's Stout and Amstel lager. Irish sales last year amounted to €332m, a 2pc increase on 2005.

Like other drinks companies in the Irish market, Heineken said off-trade sales showed strong growth



Brian O'Driscoll scores for Leinster during a Heineken match

Televised soccer matches have been shown to contain an enormous number of visual references to alcohol, via the advertising hoarding and branding on other items at the match. One study conducted during EURO 2012 found an average of 1.24 visual references to alcohol brands per minute during broadcasts (Adams et al, 2014). Matches are typically played during day time and thereby expose children to enormous number of messages linking alcohol and sport (Graham & Adams, 2013).

Q2. What is the evidence of the specific impact of sponsorship on its own?

The entities best positioned to answer this question are those who enter into sponsorship arrangements. However, companies are invariably reluctant to share this evidence with their competitors, or with the wider public. It must be the case, for example, that the Board of Heineken has insisted that the CEO of the company provide it with evidence to justify the ongoing investment of millions of Euros of the company's money on major sports sponsorship campaigns. The CEO and Board, given their responsibility to their international shareholders must be persuaded by that evidence. However, this evidence, and the other evaluations of sports sponsorship by other alcohol companies, will not be provided voluntarily to the Working Group on Regulating Sponsorship by Alcohol Companies of Major Sporting Events. They will remain safely tucked away in the filing cabinets of the marketing departments of the various alcohol companies.

In their book entitled *Sport, beer and gender: Promotional culture and contemporary social life*, Wenner & Jackson (2009) examined the drinks promotion strategies of Anheuser-Busch and observed that "sponsorship of sport..... has become the company's primary tool in most of its markets".

In Britain, the House of Commons Select Committee on Health demanded, and obtained, a large number of internal marketing documents from alcohol producers and their communications agencies in order to examine the thinking and strategic planning that underpin alcohol promotion (Hastings et al, 2010; Institute of Alcohol Studies, 2013). These documents indicate how powerful the industry views sponsorship and provide an indication of their marketing strategy in use of sponsorship. In one document from Carling it stated the band or team are "the heroes at the venue and Carling should use them to 'piggy back' and engage customers emotions". Put in an Irish context, Heineken wants to piggy back on the joy, euphoria and excitement experienced by supporters as they watch their province win the European Rugby Cup. In doing so, the viewer/supporter, whether 8 years old or 28 years old, connects these positive emotional states with the drink brand Heineken. The documents make it clear that sponsorship is targeted at the youngest cohort of drinkers as " market research data on 15 and 16 year olds are used to guide campaign development and deployment "(Hastings et al, 2000). In light of their sponsorship of music and sport, a Carling Executive declared "They [young men] think about 4 things, we brew 1 and sponsor 2 of them."

Another source of evidence of the power of sponsorship comes from another industry who were enthusiastic sponsors of sport but who fell foul of public health concerns, the Tobacco industry. The 1998 Minnesota settlement requires maintenance of web-sites and depositories containing over 33 million pages of the tobacco industry's corporate documents (Rybak & Phelps, 1998). These documents have been examined by experts and academics in the field of marketing. In one review of these papers, Lavack (2003) states "Much can be learned about the effective use of sponsorship by studying the tactics and techniques used by tobacco companies". She outlines the comprehensive criteria set out by tobacco companies and their evaluations of sponsorship campaigns. The Tobacco industry understood that sponsorship "activity should allow for long-term association, recognising the slow-build nature of awareness and image transfer from sponsorship". In addition to sponsorship being quite slow to deliver benefit for the sponsor, it is similarly slow to wane once established. In 1998, cigarette brands, Benson & Hedges and Winfield, despite having been banned two years earlier, were recalled as the 5th and 10th most well known sponsors of Australian sport (Woodward). Once a company has successfully aligned its product with a sport it continues to reap benefit from that association once the sponsorship has ended. In light of the facts that sponsorship is slow to demonstrate an impact and also then slow to wane, it is very difficult to measure the effect of sponsorship campaigns and sponsorship bans on alcohol use.

The vigour with which the tobacco industry fought efforts to curtail its right to engage in sports sponsorship highlights the power of this activity. The alcohol industry in Norway undertook major legal challenges to bans on sports sponsorship in that country in the late 1990s following alcohol legislation in 1997 (Karlsson & Österberg, 2002).

Sports sponsorship delivers much more for companies than simple product promotion. In her review of tobacco industry practices, Lavack (2003) identified a number of their objectives in this activity. The key objectives she reports were to:-

- *"Create goodwill*
- *Enhance community relations*
- *Build political support*
- *Enhance brand image*
- *Increase brand recognition and recall*
- *Gain media exposure for the brand*
- *Take advantage of loopholes in regulations"*

A number of these objectives should concern to us as citizens. Sponsorship of major sporting events often provides the sponsor with direct access to very senior political figures. These informal and casual contacts are not inconsequential, and provide sponsors with opportunities to build connections with politicians who may be facing dilemmas regarding regulation of the alcohol industry. The opportunity to take advantage of loopholes is highlighted in Figure 1 above. The alcohol companies want coverage of the events they sponsor in the media and hence will make enormous efforts to look after journalists. Journalists are key commentators upon and shapers of social policy in Ireland.

Q3. What evidence is available on the impact of sports sponsorship as part of integrated marketing tool to promote alcohol consumption?

Sponsorship or sport is usually, if not always, just one element of an integrated marketing campaign for industries and businesses that purchase such sponsorship deals (Lavack, 2003). This is evident in Ireland also, with the major drinks companies who engage in sports sponsorship also engaging in simultaneous promotional activity such as advertising on broadcast and print media, poster campaigns, social media marketing, sponsorship of cultural and music events and in store product promotion. Children and adolescents regularly encounter alcohol promotion via all of these different media (Hope, 2009). Most obviously, televised sporting events sponsored by alcohol brands typically also include standard advertisements for the same brand during ad breaks. The evidence from the UK is that sports sponsorship by alcohol companies is integrated with other promotional activities (Hastings et al, 2010).

Due to the fact that alcohol promotion is a multifaceted and integrated activity, the Public Health (Alcohol) Bill, in line with the recommendations of the Working group on Alcohol in the NDS, proposes to target a number of marketing activities in addition to tackling sports sponsorship. It proposes to impose time restrictions on advertising, curtail outdoor poster advertising and to obstruct in store alcohol promotion by enforcing structural separation. If these other measures go ahead while a sponsorship ban is not put in place, then increased revenue will simply be directed towards sport and music sponsorship, mirroring the strategies adopted by the tobacco industry. There is therefore a need to tackle all forms of alcohol promotion, including sports sponsorship, in a coordinated manner, as outlined in the Public Health (Alcohol) Bill.

Q4. What evidence is available on the causal relationship between sports sponsorship on alcohol consumption, including by young people?

This question is oddly structured as it appears to lay the burden of proof at the door of those who believe that sports sponsorship by alcohol companies should end. Everyone concedes that sports sponsorship may possibly contribute to use and abuse of alcohol by young people. According to the WHO, "... in the population aged 25–59 years alcohol is the world’s number one risk factor for impaired health and premature death". In light of the possibility that sports sponsorship is further driving up alcohol consumption, thereby adding to this preventable illness and death in Irish citizens, one would imagine that we would now be demanding evidence that sports sponsorship is safe, and insisting on proof that it is doing nothing to increase alcohol consumption. If such proof existed, then bodies such as the College of Psychiatrists of Ireland would not be calling for a ban on sports sponsorship by alcohol brands.

The drinks industry routinely declares that the goal of sponsorship, and all other promotional activities, is to increase brand awareness and to generate brand switching. Carlsberg, sponsor of the FAI, states this in its 2013 Annual Report: "There are compelling business reasons why sponsorships play an important and integral part in the Group’s marketing activities. Ultimately, sponsorships are about growing our business and driving the long-term sales of our beer brands".

The heaviest drinkers in Ireland are young people aged 18-29 years old (Morgan et al, 2009). Most young adults in Ireland use alcohol as a harmful or hazardous manner (Dooley & Fitzgerald, 2012; Morgan et al, 2009). In view of the quantities of alcohol consumed by young Irish adults, and many Irish adolescents, it does make sense from a business perspective to target them very specifically with marketing campaigns. As people embark on their drinking careers, they are also more likely to be move brands when compared to older adults. If you can hook people as young adults to your brand, you may well have them for life. Therefore, the main battleground for drinks manufacturers relates to the 18-24 year-old age bracket (Hastings, 2010; Crompton, 2014; Institute of Alcohol Studies, 2013).

The great challenge for companies relates to the fact that time moves on and membership of this age cohort changes. The 18-24 year olds of 2014 will be 25-31 year olds in 2021. It is the current cohort of 11-17 year olds who are being fought over by drinks companies as they look ahead to their market share of this important 18-24 year old sector in 2021. When Carlsberg state clearly that they want to "drive the long-term sales" of their beer brands, then they must seek to build brand awareness and loyalty in those children and adolescents because they will be the heavy drinking young adults of tomorrow. The drinks industry may protest that it does not do so, but the fact remains that they have a financial incentive to target children and adolescents. Again, evidence from television advertising in the UK indicates that they are doing so, as children see more alcohol adverts on television than adults (Winpenney et al, 2012; Hastings & Sheron, 2013). Given the sophistication of marketing and audience profiling, can that really be an accident?

Another inconvenient fact for the drinks industry relates to the fact that the age of onset of drinking in Ireland in the past 20-30 years (Smyth et al, 2011), with children typically now starting to drink at around 15 years of age. Most are drinking regularly by age 17 years. It is therefore a simple fact that 300,000 children and adolescents aged 10 to 17 years are going to start drinking alcohol in Ireland in the next five years. If they follow in the path of the cohort just ahead of them, then they will become very heavy drinkers, and thereby very profitable for the drinks industry by the time they reach their early 20s. Therefore, there is a major financial incentive to target all marketing activities, including sports sponsorship, at children and adolescents, although it would be truly stupid of them to ever admit doing so. Whether deliberately targeted at children and adolescents or not, it is certain that sponsorship in general is reaching them with large numbers owning alcohol branded products and encountering a vast array of alcohol promotional activities (Hope, 2009).

As stated earlier, it is very difficult to assess the impact of specific components of multimodal marketing campaigns on general alcohol consumption. As sponsorship is just one component of these campaigns it is therefore difficult to assess its particular impact. However, there is now solid evidence that indicates that the more children are exposed to alcohol marketing, including sponsorship, (1) the greater the likelihood that they drink at an early age, and (2) the greater the likelihood that they drink in a more harmful manner (Anderson et al, 2009; Smith & Foxcroft, 2009).

Not everyone is interested in sport. Therefore sports sponsorship can only be expected to impact upon certain subsections of the population. This obviously includes the demographic who are the heaviest drinkers in Ireland, males aged 18-29 years. In a general population survey of 1,000 adults conducted in Ireland, published in *Check Out* magazine in August 2013, it emerged that 10% of people agreed that sports sponsorship influenced their

brand choice. More importantly, 9% of people agreed that "a ban on alcohol sponsorship of sporting events will lead you to reduce your current level of spend on alcohol products."

Young adults aged 18-24 years old were the group who were most likely to agree that a ban on sports sponsorship would reduce their drinking, 17% of them doing so. In many ways, it is surprising that so many participants acknowledged that sponsorship had an impact on their brand choices and general alcohol use, as research consistently demonstrates that people greatly underestimate the extent to which any form of product promotion has on their own behaviour (Connors, 2005). Consequently, the findings of the survey can be taken to indicate the absolute minimum proportion of the population who are substantially influenced by sports sponsorship specifically. Also, the survey did not include young people under the age of 18 years. Given the demonstrated trend of increasing influence of sponsorship with lower age, it seems very likely that under 18s are materially influenced by sports sponsorship.

Research projects led by Kerry O'Brien and conducted in New Zealand, Australia and Britain demonstrate that sportsmen and women, who play for clubs in receipt of any form of alcohol sponsorship, drank more heavily than those who played in clubs without any such sponsorship (O'Brien & Kypri, 2008; O'Brien et al, 2011, O'Brien et al, 2014).

In light of this evidence the Steering Group Report on a National Substance Misuse Strategy (Department of Health, 2012) recommended a ban on sponsorship of sporting and other cultural activities by alcohol companies. Ireland is not alone in moving relentlessly, although slowly, towards this realisation. In New Zealand the Law Commission has prompted moves towards a ban on alcohol sponsorship (Cody & Jackson, 2014). Interestingly, many sporting organisations, such as New Zealand Rugby league, have taken a lead on this issue, recognising the incongruity and hypocrisy of promoting a product that they advise their participants to largely avoid, and are very actively moving away from alcohol sponsorship. In Australia 12 leading sporting organisations have recently agreed to end all existing and future alcohol sponsorship agreements as part of the "Be the Influence" strategy (Cody & Jackson, 2014).

Q5. What impact would further regulation of the sponsorship of sport by alcohol companies have on public health and related costs to the Exchequer of alcohol misuse?

It is very difficult to quantify the impact of the banning of alcohol sports sponsorship on public health and other societal costs. We know that alcohol cost Ireland 3.7 billion euro per annum in 2007, with Health (1.2 billion) and Criminal Justice (1.2) billion forming the biggest component of these financial costs. Alcohol is a contributor to many illnesses including liver disease, breast cancer, oropharyngeal cancers, pancreatitis and dementia and these illnesses account for 2,000 hospital beds every day of the year. It contributes to a range of mental health problems and to suicide (Dooley & Fitzgerald, 2012; Bedford, O'Farrell, Howell, 2006). It contributes to many

social ills from child abuse and neglect to rape and sexual violence to crimes from public disorder up to homicide (Dept of Health, 2012).

There appears to be a near linear relationship between these problems and per capita alcohol consumption. Sports sponsorship by alcohol companies is just one element of sophisticated and integrated marketing campaigns. However, it appears to be the dominant marketing strategy adopted by beer brands in particular (Crompton, 2014; Wenner & Jackson, 2009). It is difficult to quantify the contribution marketing to overall alcohol consumption. One can only speculate about the exact contribution of sponsorship to this overall effect, especially in light of its delayed onset of action and slow decline in impact after its cessation (Lavack, 2003).

In order to estimate the impact, some insights can be gained from the other health damaging product, tobacco, which has been subjected to major restrictions in advertising and sponsorship. It is estimated that bans of advertising, promotion and sponsorship of tobacco products resulted in an average fall of 7% in overall consumption levels (WHO, 2013). Therefore, one would expect that similar bans applied to alcohol would have broadly similar impacts. In other words, it would be unreasonable to expect that a ban on alcohol promotion would deliver reductions of 20% in consumption levels. Equally, it would be unreasonable to think that promotion contributes less than 2% to consumption levels in the general population. Therefore it seems very likely that the real impact of all alcohol marketing lies somewhere close to 7% of per capita consumption. Like tobacco, the evidence indicates that alcohol marketing has its largest impact on adolescents and young adults (Lovato, Watts & Stead, 2011; Anderson et al, 2009). As such it is likely to contribute to closer to 10% of consumption by young people. Sponsorship is just one element of marketing. One assumes that the drinks industry targets its marketing money into different activities based upon its impact on consumption. While marketing figures are hard to obtain and some alcohol sectors are much more active in sports sponsorship than others, it appears to invest about one third of its marketing budget in such activities, with a greater proportion for beer brands and less for other alcohol products. Using the assumptions outlined above, this suggests that the impact of sports sponsorship, as a stand alone entity, accounts for in the region of 1.5-3% of total population consumption. While this may seem small, given the extent of the harm generated by alcohol use, the gains for society are very substantial from such a potential reduction in alcohol consumption. It would free up 30-60 hospital beds and reduce overall health care costs by 18-36 million euros per annum. The cost savings within the criminal justice sector would be 18-36 million euros per annum. As most of the criminal justice costs linked to alcohol use are intoxication related, the cost benefit would be evident quickly. The health related costs would be slower to materialise as many are related to cumulative drinking over many years. A 1.5 to 3% fall in general alcohol consumption would contribute to reductions in domestic violence, marital breakdown, child neglect, suicide and sexual violence.

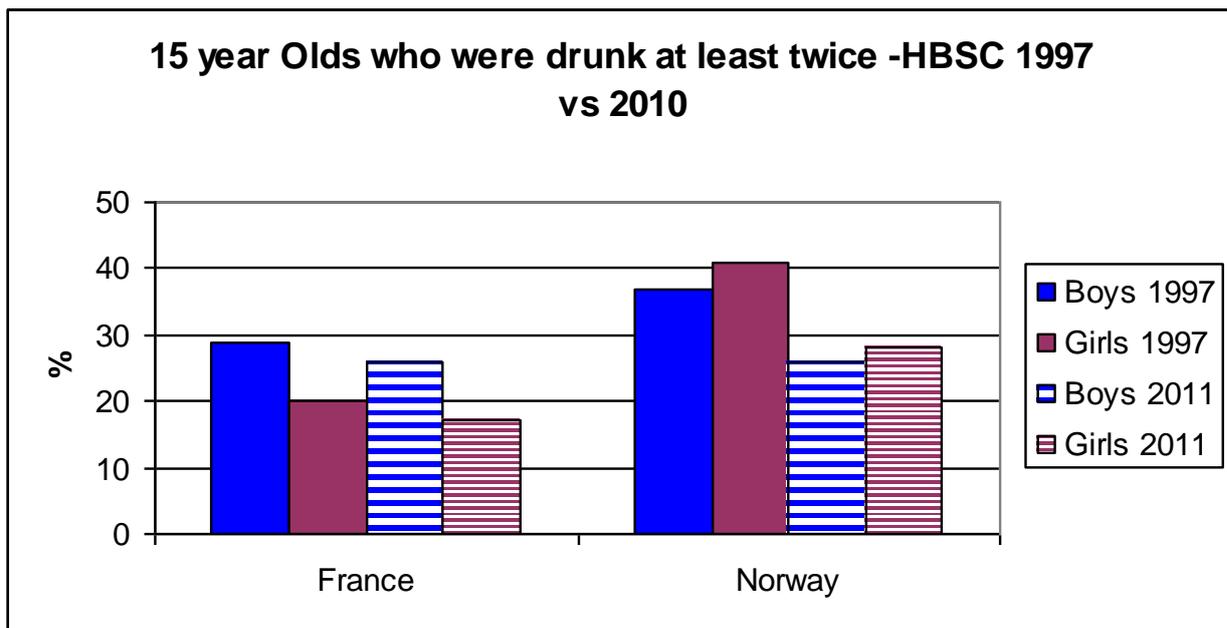
Q6. What evidence is available on the impact of a ban/restriction on sports sponsorship by alcohol companies in other countries?

France has had a ban in place on alcohol sponsorship of sport and cultural events, in addition to bans on many other aspects of marketing since 1991. These efforts to curtail marketing were implemented alongside a suite of other simultaneous measures, focusing on cost and availability, with the goal of reducing alcohol use in France. The restrictions on marketing were enshrined in the Loi Evin law (Rigaud & Craplet, 2004). The full ranges of measures, taken together, were successful at reducing per capita alcohol consumption by 20% between 1989 and 2001. It is not possible to isolate the exact contribution of the ban on sports sponsorship on this success. In common with the tobacco industry, the alcohol industry has contempt for laws enacted by politicians in democracies across the world where it perceives that these laws will negatively impact its profitability. Consequently, there have been multiple legal challenges to the Loi Evin, many taken to the European court, but courts have vindicated the right of the French government to prioritise the health and wellbeing of its citizens over the commercial rights of the alcohol industry. Given the facts that alcohol consumption levels have reduced and that many legal challenges they have had to endure, one imagines that the French would have revoked the Loi Evin if it was not seen to be both an effective and a proportionate measure.

Another country in Europe which has a ban on sports sponsorship in place is Norway. While there have been restrictions on many aspects of alcohol promotion in Norway for decades, this was put on a more legal footing in 1997 with new legislation. These new laws were flouted by beer producers in the following years and they continued to sponsor sports teams, but ultimately they lost their legal challenge years later (Karlsson & Österberg, 2002). Given the range of measures incorporated in the Norwegian response to alcohol use in the late 1990s it is simply not possible to discern the exact contribution of the ban on sports sponsorship to the very low levels of per capita alcohol use evident in Norway.

While the alcohol and sports sponsorship issue was being debated in Ireland in 2013, those opposed to the ban spread some misinformation about a lack of impact of the Loi Evin on adolescents in France. Data on alcohol consumption by French teenagers prior to 1991 is not available. The *Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC)* study has been ongoing across European countries for the past 20 years. A key measure which it reports is the proportion of 15-year-olds who have been drunk at least twice. The data for France and Norway are provided below, and indicate a slight decline in drunkenness among French 15-year-olds from 1997 to 2010 and substantial reduction in this behaviour among Norwegian teenagers, following their 1997 legislation.

Figure 2.



Adolescent drunkenness is subject to multiple influences including family, community, culture and alcohol policy measures (Smyth, Kelly & Cox, 2011). As stated above the contribution of sports sponsorship to adolescent drinking is unlikely to be above 10%. Many Southern European & Asian countries, which have traditionally held very intolerant views regarding intoxication, are noticing an emerging youth culture which is embracing drunkenness with a concerning enthusiasm.

Q7. What evidence is available on the financial value of alcohol sponsorship to sporting organisations?

Can this be broken down across different sports and types of activity?

This is difficult to estimate because those who know the figures have been unwilling to make them public, citing commercial sensitivity. Despite meeting all of the relevant stakeholders during their deliberations in 2013, the Joint Committee on Transport and Communications was unable to clarify the amount of money involved. The figure of 15-20 million euros per annum has been suggested and we accept that sporting organisations are likely to be in receipt of this quantity of money from the drinks industry per annum.

As was the case with the tobacco industry, the alcohol industry has no interest in the sport with highest participation in the country, as it is not sportsmen and women that their sponsorship is particularly targeting. Instead, the drinks industry is interested primarily in televised sport (Crompton, 2014). Consequently, the sport with the highest participation across the population, swimming, obtains no money from the alcohol industry as far as we know (Lunn & Layte, 2009). The money goes to the sports with the largest television viewing audiences, these being soccer, rugby and Gaelic games. Basketball has a very high rate of youth participation in Ireland, treble that of rugby for example (Fahy et al, 2005), but again receives no alcohol sponsorship money as

far as we know. These facts support the view that drinks brands do not sponsor sport to facilitate sporting involvement by ordinary citizens, but instead their motivation is to link their brands with highly visible, televised sporting success and excellence (Crompton, 2014).

Q8. What impact would the loss of this funding have on the sports sector/organisations/events/international events?

Given the lack of transparency regarding the quantity of sports sponsorship revenue, it is difficult to know the extent to which the sports bodies in receipt of sponsorship will be affected.

Sporting bodies may be initially negatively impacted financially by a loss of alcohol industry funding. Sporting organisations around the world predicted calamity if denied access to tobacco industry sponsorship. However, sport survived after the departure of tobacco money. This was studied most intensively in Australia. There, tobacco brands were major sponsors of cricket, Australian Rules football and motor sport. All of these sports protested loudly prior to the ban. They all indicated that there were no alternative sponsors and they would face financial disaster. The complete tobacco sponsorship ban came into effect in 1996, at which point the total revenue received by sport from all sponsorship sources was 350 million dollars (Woodward). Four years later, far from falling, sports sponsorship revenue had doubled to 700 million dollars per annum, and this excluded all sponsorship connected to the Olympics in Sydney.

The entry into sponsorship arrangements by sporting bodies comes with risks and some potentially adverse consequences. Crompton (2014) breaks these down into (1) Operational risks and (2) Reputational risks. The former relates to the partial loss of control of the sponsored event by the sporting organisation. The timing and format of matches and competitions may be altered to meet the sponsor's demands and their desire to fit in with TV schedules. Players, spectators, mentors and officials all become a secondary priority. This issue can occur with any sponsor.

Reputational risks arise where sporting bodies permit their sport to be sponsored by a business which is poorly viewed by members of the public or by sectors of the sports support base. These include the tobacco, alcohol and gambling industries (Crompton, 2014; Jones 2010). It is worth restating the fact from the WHO (2012) report that "in the population aged 25–59 years alcohol is the world's number one risk factor for impaired health and premature death". As the public become better informed of these harms generated by alcohol in our society, all sports which accept drinks industry sponsorship expose themselves to this reputational risk. The GAA All Star awards are an acknowledgement of the greatest sportsmen in the country, a celebration of athleticism, strength, agility and determination. Looking back now in 2014, it seems truly crazy that these great sporting achievements were sponsored by a cigarette brand, Carrolls, a couple of decades ago. With organisations such

as the WHO pointing to alcohol as the biggest single contributor to preventable illness and death in people of sport-playing age, and given the fact that general public know that alcohol consumption damages sporting performance, the sports which accept sponsorship from drinks companies are damaging their own brand. This, in turn makes them less attractive to other potential sponsors. The experience in Australia, that sports sponsorship revenue doubled in the four years after the ban on tobacco sponsorship, may in part be explained by the increased attractiveness of sports to a broader range of sponsor suitors once it had been made to distance itself from tobacco. The incongruity between sport and alcohol is increasingly recognised by the public (Crompton, 2014).

One of the other facts to emerge following the banning of tobacco sponsorship in Australia was the exaggeration of the value of that sponsorship (Woodward). It became clear that only 50% of the tobacco industry money spent on sponsorship was actually paid to the sporting bodies. The remaining money was used by the tobacco companies to promote and broadcast their sponsorship of the sport. It therefore seems very likely that alcohol brands overstate the value of their sponsorship to sporting organisations.

The sporting bodies have indicated that a ban on alcohol sponsorship would put them at a competitive disadvantage in international sporting competitions. France has had a ban in place since 1991 with the Loi Evin. France never featured in a Soccer World Cup final prior to the Loi Evin. They have featured in two since then, winning in 1998. In the rugby world cup, France has been the top performing European team. They were runners up in 2011 & 1999, and have attained a top four position in every competition since 1995. With regard to club rugby, French teams have won three of the last five European Rugby Cups. The most successful team in the history of the European Rugby Cup is a French team, Toulouse. The richest teams in European rugby are all French despite their inability to avail of alcohol industry money. All of this confirms that there certainly can be success and money after a ban on alcohol sports sponsorship.

Again the major sporting bodies have stated that they will be unable to host major international sporting competitions if a ban on alcohol sponsorship is in place in Ireland. Again the evidence from France contradicts this very pessimistic viewpoint. France hosted the Soccer World Cup in 1998. France successfully hosted the Rugby World Cup in 2007.

Q9. What evidence is available on alternative sources of sponsorship for the sports sector?

While the ending of alcohol sports sponsorship would remove the reputational damage done to sporting bodies by their association with a product which is increasingly recognised to be a major health and social problem in Ireland (Crompton, 2014), there may still be some difficulty in replacing this revenue with similarly lucrative sponsorship deals. It seems possible that there are few businesses as desperate as the drinks industry to capture

the hearts and minds of Irish teenagers and young people. Given the dominance of alcohol brands in sports sponsorship sector, it does seem likely that they are prepared to pay a premium over and above most other brands. However, there are examples of alcohol sponsorship being seamlessly replaced once sponsorship arrangements have run their course, such as the Celtic League in rugby, which was sponsored by a cider brand but then found RABO Bank to replace it. Hence, that premium price is not very different from that of other sponsors, perhaps 10-20% greater. In view of total alcohol sponsorship revenue of 15-20 million per annum and this assumption that alcohol companies are willing to pay 10-20% more on average, then the shortfall faced by Irish sport could be as low as 1.5 million annually. The worst case scenario is a deficit of 4 million across all of Irish sport.

As stated in response to Question 8, the complete tobacco sponsorship ban came into effect in 1996 in Australia. Over the years after the ban, instead of falling, sports sponsorship revenue rose annually, and had doubled within four years (Woodward).

While the GAA has not moved away from alcohol sponsorship completely, it has sought to make itself less reliant upon it. It appears to have done this successfully, and is likely to have gained reputationally as a result.

Q10. What other funding supports could be used to help sporting organisations instead of sponsorship?

We have estimated above in Q9 that the doomsday scenario for Irish sport following a ban is a reduction in sponsorship revenues of just 4 million euro per annum. This could easily be found if there was the political will to do so.

In Australia, when tobacco sponsorship was ended in the State of Victoria, the Victorian Government immediately increased tax on tobacco and used this money to fund the Victorian Health Promotion Foundation (VHPF). The VHPF then undertook to sponsor sports who found themselves without a sponsor due to the ban (Jones, 2010; Woodward).

The working group on alcohol recommended that a social responsibility levy could be applied to the drinks industry (Department of Health, 2012). This could be used in part to fund any shortfall between the sponsorship money provided by the drinks industry and that provided by future sponsors from other business sectors.

Increases in alcohol taxes are often described as "punishing ordinary drinkers" by the drinks industry and other groups with a financial vested interest. This is patently populist nonsense. It is not unreasonable of our society to expect that those of us who drink alcohol should, at the very least, cover the costs of the harm which we generate. As stated earlier, the tax revenue from alcohol amounts to just 2 billion euro per annum while the annual cost to society is 3.7 billion (Dept of Health, 2012). While a 10% increase in alcohol tax revenue would

still mean that drinkers continue to avoid covering the costs of the harm they generate, it would add 200 million to the state coffers, and a very small portion of that could be used to cover any shortfall in sponsorship revenue for sporting organisations. Currently, the Department of Finance is refunding VAT of about 21 million euro per annum to supermarkets who sell alcohol at below cost prices, a practice which fuels alcohol related harm in Ireland (NOFLA, 2013).

Alternatively, the large grocery stores could see their annual license fee to sell alcohol increased to generate the needed 4 million per annum. They currently sell about 30% of the alcohol in the country, a rise from 0% 30 years ago. They sell about one billion standard drinks of alcohol per annum. An increase in license fee, linked to their sales volume, of 0.4 cent per standard drink would generate the required 4 million euro per annum for sports.

An advantage of increased allocation of funding to sporting bodies from increased alcohol taxation is that it would result in a more equitable distribution of revenue. Alcohol sports sponsorship goes almost exclusively to sports with large TV audiences. This is quite poorly correlated with sports participation in Ireland. Swimming and basketball have high levels of participation (Lunn & Layte, 2009; Fahy et al, 2005), and are therefore very worthy of financial support, but attract little sponsorship (from any source) because they have a minimal presence on TV schedules.

Q11. What further options could be considered for regulating/restricting alcohol sponsorship?

The College of Psychiatrists of Ireland sees a simple ban of sports sponsorship by alcohol companies as the only feasible option. This would work in the same manner as the ban on tobacco brand sponsorship.

Additionally, Ireland should seek to get support for a similar ban across Europe, and indeed worldwide. We have been successful at leading on major public health initiatives in the recent past, such as the work based tobacco ban. We could join France in demanding a role out such an alcohol sponsorship ban across the EU.

During the national debate on sports sponsorship in 2013, a dominant theme which emerged from opponents of such a plan related to the potential damage done to local clubs. Specifically, there was a concern that funding paid to clubs by local pubs and hotels might be banned. While the College of Psychiatrists of Ireland would like to see the greatest possible distance put between alcohol and sport for public health reasons, the local sponsorship arrangements between retailers of alcohol and clubs are not in danger. Garages, grocery stores, pubs and hotels all sell tobacco products. This does not prohibit them from sponsoring sports teams despite the current ban on sports sponsorship by tobacco brands. These same businesses also sell alcohol and will be able to continue sponsoring teams following the ban on sports sponsorship by alcohol brands, as long as they are promoting their business and not any specific alcohol (or tobacco) product which they sell.

Q12. What regulatory models have worked well in other countries?

The regulatory approaches in France and Norway appear to have worked well. Both have been in place for over 15 years, and each has been subjected to multiple challenges in national and international courts, all of which they have withstood.

Q13. Are there ways to make the existing voluntary Code of Practice more effective?

Voluntary codes were attempted in the case of tobacco. They did not work. They have been attempted in many areas of alcohol regulation and have a universally bad name. They provide the illusion of safety and protection, while not providing any real protection.

During the last rugby world cup, Guinness had a poster campaign across Ireland which featured a past great Irish rugby player running across a pitch with the strap line "Surge towards greatness - Guinness". On 31st August 2011, a complaint was made about the poster that it was in breach of the current voluntary advertising code (Section 7.4b) by linking Guinness to sporting success. On 15th December 2011, long after the World Cup was over and the poster campaign had finished, the ASI upheld the complaint. There was absolutely no consequence for Diageo or Guinness as a result of their breach of the code. This is a small example of the utter pointlessness of toothless self regulation guidelines.

Regulation of alcohol promotion activities must occur by legislation, and when done so, our legislators and citizens must anticipate that every new law will be tested to the limits by drinks companies and challenged in every court available to them.

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