

ALCOHOL - THE FACTS - NEWSPAPER ARTICLE

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On behalf of The World Association of Technology Teachers

W.A.T.T.



World Association of Technology Teachers

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ALCOHOL - THE FACTS - NEWSPAPER ARTICLE

Read the newspaper article below. Consider all the comments especially those about the alcohol being more dangerous than drugs such as heroin. Then answer the questions on the second sheet.

The **Guardian**

Alcohol 'more harmful than heroin or crack'

Sacked government drugs adviser David Nutt publishes investigation in *Lancet* reopening debate on classification.

The Guardian, Monday 1 November 2010



Photograph: Action Press/Rex Features

Heroin causes harm to users, but alcohol causes considerably more harm in the wider community, a recent study has found.

Alcohol is the most dangerous drug in the UK by a considerable margin, beating heroin and crack cocaine into second and third place.

The new medical paper in the Medical Journal 'The Lancet', suggests that legally available alcohol and tobacco were more dangerous than cannabis and LSD.

It examines nine categories of harm that drugs can do to the individual, "from death to damage to mental functioning and loss of relationships". The maximum possible harm score was 100 and the minimum zero.

Overall, alcohol scored 72 - against 55 for heroin and 54 for crack. The most dangerous drugs to their individual users were ranked as heroin, crack and then crystal meth. The most harmful to others were alcohol, heroin and crack in that order.

For overall harm, the other drugs examined ranked as follows: crystal meth (33), cocaine (27), tobacco (26), amphetamine/speed (23), cannabis (20), GHB (18), benzodiazepines (15), ketamine (15), methadone (13), butane (10), qat (9), ecstasy (9), anabolic steroids (9), LSD (7), buprenorphine (6) and magic mushrooms (5). Sacked government drugs adviser

David Nutt, calls for far more effort to be put into reducing harm caused by alcohol, pointing out that its economic costs, as well as the costs to society of addiction and broken families, are very high. Taxation on alcohol is "completely inappropriate", he said – with strong cider, for instance, taxed at a fifth of the rate of wine – and action should particularly target the low cost and promotion of alcohol such as Bacardi breezers to young people.

Don Shenker, the Chief Executive of Alcohol Concern said, "What this study and new classification shows is that successive governments have mistakenly focused attention on illicit drugs, whereas the pervading harms from alcohol should have given a far higher priority. Drug misusers are still ten times more likely to receive support for their addiction than alcohol misusers, costing the taxpayer billions in repeat hospital admissions and alcohol related crime. Alcohol misuse has been exacerbated in recent years as government failed to accept the link between cheap prices, higher consumption and resultant harms to individuals and society."

"The government should now urgently ensure alcohol is made less affordable and invest in prevention and treatment services to deal with the rise in alcohol dependency that has occurred."

QUESTIONS

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1. Write a summary of the evidence in the newspaper article, that suggests alcohol is more harmful than drugs such as heroin?

2. Do you think that alcohol is more harmful than other drugs? Explain your answer.

Consider the harm alcohol does to the 'drinker' and also to his/her family and friends.

3. People who drink too much can have problems keeping their job or doing their work effectively. Explain why this often happens. The key words / phrases may help you answer this question.

LATE FOR WORK LACK OF CONCENTRATION OFF ILL ILL AT WORK
DISLIKED BY FELLOW TEAM WORKERS UNPRODUCTIVE POOR QUALITY WORK
DOES NOT REACH TARGETS UNSAFE IF USING EQUIPMENT OVER THE LEGAL LIMIT

4. Do you think excessive drinking of alcoholic beverages is dangerous?

YES

NO