Industry interference with alcohol policy
WHO/ Workshop
18-21 June 2019

Dr Taisia Huckle
Massey University, New Zealand
The SAFER Initiative

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action Package</th>
<th>National Action</th>
<th>Global Support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>Implement</td>
<td>WHO Technical Guidance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Strong political will, adequate resources, and technical and institutional capacity are critical to enacting the SAFER interventions at the country level.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Monitor</td>
<td>WHO/UN Joint Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Strong monitoring systems must support SAFER implementation to enable accountability and track progress.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Protect</td>
<td>Communication and Advocacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Alcohol control measures must be guided and formulated by public health interests and protected from industry interference and commercial interests.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

National Action

Implement
Strong political will, adequate resources, and technical and institutional capacity are critical to enacting the SAFER interventions at the country level.

Monitor
Strong monitoring systems must support SAFER implementation to enable accountability and track progress.

Protect
Alcohol control measures must be guided and formulated by public health interests and protected from industry interference and commercial interests.
Why do we need protection from commercial interests?

- Expansion into LMICs
- Economic/trade agreements
- Size of the Transnational Alcohol Corporations
- Digital marketing
Industry influence: the power of the corporation

Week by week, month by month, year by year, the modern corporation exercises a greater influence on our livelihood and the way we live than unions, universities, politicians and government.”

— J.K. Galbraith *The Age of Uncertainty*, 1977
• Alcohol produced and marketed by large transnational corporations
Interests of alcohol producers/retailers conflict with health and wellbeing

• The corporations’ responsibility is to their shareholders

• The corporations rely on harmful drinking occasions for sales and profits
Alcohol consumed in harmful drinking occasions

Proportion of commercial and unrecorded alcohol consumed in harmful drinking occasions

Inter agency task force on NCDs reports to the WHO Executive Board on industry influences

• missions carried out by the Task Force have highlighted pervasive industry attempts to influence government policy. While the activities of the tobacco industry are well established, the Task Force increasingly witnesses similar strategies from the alcohol, food and beverage industries.......

EB142/15
ANNEX 4
PROGRESS REPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS INTER-AGENCY TASK FORCE ON THE PREVENTION AND CONTROL OF NONCOMMUNICABLE DISEASES

22. December 2017
Lobbying

• the strategies of alcohol industry actors are focused on long-term relationship building with policy makers, involving the provision and interpretation of information and the promotion of various forms of self-regulation.

  • Hawkins and Holden 2014

  • http://www.ingentaconnect.com/content/tpp/pap/2014/00000042/00000001/art00004
• Industry is well organised with global trade associations for lobbying (International Alliance for Responsible Drinking) and partners at national level.
Industry involvement—focus on industry as partner and on less effective measures
ICAP/Diageo initiated workshop, March 2009
Corporate Social Responsibility - an increasingly common approach to influence

- CSR is used to frame issues, define problems and guide policy debates. In doing this, the alcohol companies deflect and shift the blame from those who manufacture and promote alcoholic products to those who consume them
  - Yoon and Lam, BMC Public Health, 2013

- For example, responsible drinking campaigns ......
This week AB InBev is launching the Global Smart Drinking Goals.
Responsible Drinking Campaigns

• These campaigns:
  • Are ambiguous - messages are not clear, responsibility not defined
    • Young adults and teenagers had a range of understandings of the messages but the messages increased positive evaluations of the companies
      • Smith et al, Health Communication, 2006
  • Imply everyone will drink
  • Put the focus on individual responsibility and away from the industry behaviour and the products
• CSR initiatives on voluntary regulation in order to delay and offset alcohol control legislation.
  • Yoon and Lam, BMC Public Health, 2013
Cooperate philanthropy

• the alcohol corporations undertake philanthropic sponsorships as a means of indirect brand marketing as well as gaining preferential access to emerging alcohol markets.

• Yoon and Lam, BMC Public Health, 2013
CSR often a form of marketing

• We found that while the alcohol industry has been claiming to undertake CSR strategies in support to the WHO Global Strategy, more than half the actions were considered to have the potential to sell alcohol products and promote brands..... from the small percentage of actions that were considered to have some level of effectiveness 40% also had marketing potential, which may undermine any attempt to control alcohol problems.
  • Pantani et al, Addiction, 2016
Engagement with researchers is a form of CSR

• “Accepting support from the alcohol industry sends a message that the industry is doing what it can to reduce alcohol-related harm and will inadvertently weaken wider efforts to reduce the damage done to population health and society”.

• Andreasson and McCambridge, 2016

NIH pulls the plug on controversial alcohol trial
By Meredith Wadman | Jun. 15, 2018, 5:45 PM
Diageo tells shareholders: Corporate Social Responsibility and lobbying is working

• “Proactive, evidence based engagement to build trust and deepen our relationship and reputation with governments, industry and other stakeholders .... successfully mitigated threats ..... to shape more balanced regulatory outcomes.” Diageo, 2017
New Zealand case study: Why Industry cannot be at the policy making table

• NZ SSAA 2012: devolved policy making on alcohol availability to local councils
• At last minute clause 81: Right of appeal to licensing authority
• This allowed e.g. police, health but also industry to appeal.
• Result......Industry directly influencing policy
New Zealand: what industry does

- Money/resources/good lawyers
- Research evidence
  - Attack published research evidence
  - Industry unpublished research evidence was treated as if equal in court
- Focus on the details, detracts from big picture.
- Tough cross-examination
- Appeal every decisions that goes against them
- Question law/interpretation
New Zealand: what public stakeholders did

- Health, researchers, police, NGOs, Hospital Dr’s, lawyers, worked together.
- Tried to sing the same tune
- Devoted the resources we could to the cause
- Produced new evidence
- We had some wins.
- Industry appealed, new law held up currently
What can we do to counter industry?

• Generate evidence – make it visible
• Research very limited on industry interference, very limited independent monitoring of alcohol industry actions - particularly political lobbying, unethical influence.
• Frameworks for monitoring food industry which may be useful e.g. Sacks 2013. Orratai doing some work in this area.
• Examples of how industry interfere in policy making are available in countries now – e.g. Viet Nam, suggest countries write these up and publish where possible.
What can we do to counter industry: advocacy?

• Transparency about corruption: civil society/NGO’s need to make visible what industry is doing.

• Capacity building in the media so they do more investigative journalism to make visible what industry does.

• Alcohol industry depend on money from heavy/harmful drinking – have to make this conflict of interest clear
Con’t

• Work together, take opportunities when they arise.

• Make the most of evidence - clear messages that re-frame industry arguments.

• Advocate to politicians directly if possible

• Ask help from your WHO office.

• WHO Framework Convention on Alcohol Control
• SHORE & Whariki Research Centre, College of Health, Massey University

• Global Alcohol Policy Alliance

• International Alcohol Control (IAC) study