

During the last century alcohol has become number one substance of use and abuse worldwide but primarily in the western world. The health problems associated with alcohol consumption costs the states and governments enormous amounts of money annually. The use of alcohol has a variety of effects on human body; the effects can be reversible or irreversible and lead to disabilities and death. The amount of alcohol use is widely dependent on culture, religion and the geographic area where we live. In some cultures and religions alcohol consumption is uncommon or even prohibited; this can be seen in Middle East and Islamic countries, whereas in other places like Europe especially in the northern hemisphere the alcohol consumption is increasing and accounts for a large number of morbidity and mortality in those areas.

Aside all the acute and chronic pathological changes in the body alcohol intoxication accounts for a large number of hospital admissions and leads to an increased workload for the already overwhelmed healthcare providers. The continuation of alcohol usage leads to alcoholism and development of dependence which except the organic changes in the body also has social and marital consequences.

Since the consequences of the increased alcohol consumption is recognized the aim of preventive measures has come to play a great role. These measures are composed of providing information to the public especially schools and youngsters where a global increase of consumption is seen. Other measures are at governmental level where new laws and regulations are passed to monitor and control the production, import and consumption. At this level the northern European countries have come further than the rest of the world by implementation of alcohol monopole where alcohol is only sold through especial stores and only people of a minimum age of eighteen can buy it.