

‘Alcohol and Ageing: why is it a problem?’

SOPA was invited to contribute to the panel discussion of a Drink Wise Age Well meeting on 5 November. Alcohol-related deaths are higher amongst people aged 55-74 than in any other age group and the cost to the NHS for this group for alcohol-related problems between 2010-2011 was 12 times higher than for 16-24 year olds. This seven year £25 million pound project is operating in five areas of deprivation across the UK. In the long term, the programme will help inform policy and practice about preventing alcohol-related harm in later life, improve health and wellbeing of people aged 50 and over at risk of developing alcohol problems and help build more effective services.

Read Lottery blog: Booze without Blues - <http://bigblog.org.uk/2014/11/07/booze-without-blues/>

Read [Alcohol and Your Body](#) website for alcohol facts.



Various points were made at the meeting:

- the slogan ‘Drink Wise Age Well’ could be considered patronising, and may be portrayed by the press as another example of the ‘baby boomers behaving badly’.
- the choice of areas of deprivation appears to be arbitrary as overconsumption is as much an issue for the older middle class as the less affluent.
- where many older people previously drank in a sociable neighbourhood pub, drinking at home contributes to loneliness and can lead to increased consumption.
- SOPA advocates that older people should contribute to any preventative approaches, and SOPA will continue to link to this project.

Simon Antrobus, Chief Executive of Addaction: “Problem drinking doesn’t happen in isolation – there are always other factors involved. This is especially true for the over 50s who can end up drinking at harmful levels as they face challenging life transitions such as retirement, loss of a loved one or loneliness.

UK partners: Addaction, Royal Voluntary Service, International Longevity Centre, Drugs and Alcohol Charities Wales, Addiction Northern Ireland, University of Bedfordshire Substance Misuse and Ageing Research Team.

Glasgow Panel Chair:

Stephen Naysmith, Editor, Herald Society

Glasgow Panel:

Professor Lawrie Elliot, School of Nursing and Midwifery, Napier University

Andrew Horne,
Director ,Addaction Scotland

Alexis Jay, Chief Social Work Advisor to the Scottish Government

John Goldie, Head of Addiction Services for South East Glasgow.

