

CALL FOR ABSTRACTS

Population Level Studies on Alcohol Consumption and Harm: Implications of Recent & Emerging Research for Alcohol Policy

A Kettil Bruun Society Thematic Symposium, 1–5 October 2006, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Background and Themes: This thematic symposium is based on several trends demonstrating the disjuncture that exists between empirical evidence and policy practices. In recent decades, a number of studies have shown strong associations between drinking levels, drinking patterns and physical harms and social problems derived from both chronic and acute effects of alcohol. Concurrently, evaluations and reviews of alcohol policies and other interventions demonstrate that some are more effective than others in reducing alcohol-related harms. However, recent changes in the EU and elsewhere have effectively increased access to alcohol suggesting that drinking rates and levels of damage may increase in the future. In short, while research has documented the substantial damage from alcohol and pointed to effective interventions, some of the most effective policy levers are currently being eroded, thus increasing the likelihood that alcohol-related social and health harms will increase.

Focus and Participants: This thematic symposium will offer an opportunity to provide an update of recent and ongoing national and international studies, and examine their implications, and impact, if any, on the policy process or outcome. Of particular interest are international and national studies that have recently examined, or are examining, the themes of this symposium. It will be open to all members of the Kettil Bruun Society for Social and Epidemiological Research on Alcohol (KBS), and other researchers interested in submitting an abstract for review.

Organization, Format and Timetable: The symposium will start on Sunday afternoon (October 1, 2006) and conclude on Thursday afternoon (October 5, 2006). All sessions will be plenary and papers will be circulated in advance. A short presentation of each paper will be followed by comments from a discussant and a general discussion. An advisory committee and local organizing committee will facilitate program planning and on-site logistics. It is expected that the registration fee of \$300 US will partially cover on-site costs, such as meals and accommodation. Registrants will be expected to arrange for their own funding to cover transportation costs. Funding is also being sought from several sources in order to offset expenses. The symposium will be hosted by the Centre for Addiction & Mental Health (CAMH) and will be held in a hotel located in downtown Toronto.

Companion Meeting: Plans are underway for a companion meeting to be held on Friday (October 6, 2006), following this KBS symposium. This meeting will be of particular relevance to policy-makers and advisors who are interested in the topics of the symposium. Researchers presenting their work during the KBS symposium will be expected to provide 2-3 page summaries to be circulated in advance to participants at the companion meeting, and several researchers will be asked to also provide a synopsis of their work at this companion event. A proposed key outcome of the companion meeting will be recommendations for promoting effective alcohol policies at all levels of government.

Guidelines: A number of abstracts have been received and accepted. If there are other researchers interested in submitting an abstract for consideration, please note the *revised deadline for abstracts is January 31, 2006*. Feedback will be provided on the status of the abstract by February 28, 2006. Full papers are due on September 15, 2006.

Text of the abstract should be no longer than 250 words and should indicate: purpose and goals, methods and design, results, and implications for alcohol policy. Please also provide full contact information when submitting your abstract: name, position, institution, mailing address, email, telephone and fax numbers.

Interested persons are encouraged to submit their abstract by **January 31, 2006** to Norman Giesbrecht, Centre for Addiction & Mental Health, 33 Russell Street, Toronto, Ontario M5S 2S1 Canada, by regular mail, fax (416 595-6899) or e-mail (Norman_giesbrecht@camh.net). If you are sending it by regular mail, please allow sufficient time so that it is received by January 31.

Please also encourage colleagues who are conducting research on the theme of this symposium to consider submitting an abstract.