

KBS Thematic Meeting:

An international research conference on “Community-based prevention of alcohol and drug-related harms” was hosted by the Alcohol and Drug Research Group of Stakes, the national Research and Development Centre for Welfare and Health, Helsinki, on 18–23 March 2002

The importance of locally initiated action to prevent problems has a long history and tradition. Such local action has become especially important in the last part of the twentieth century with the rise of free trade agreements and international efforts to remove barriers to the flow of good across national boundaries and within nations. In the last few decades, research has played an important role in community action by developing knowledge on implementation process and by evaluating the effectiveness of local prevention efforts.

The increased importance of community action efforts to prevent alcohol and drug problems had stimulated true working partnerships across the world between scientists and local practitioners and policy makers. The documentation of these partnerships, both the successes and the failures, is critical to more effective prevention in the 21st Century.

The aim of the conference was to further develop the science-based understanding of these processes. The conference was the fifth in the Kettil Bruun Society’s series of international research meetings on the topic of community action research and the prevention of alcohol and other drug problems. Even though different prevention projects and research methodologies have been discussed in these conferences, many common themes have appeared, for example, problems of research methodologies, types of interventions, issues related to the organization and continuity of prevention work, ownership of the action, sustainability and partnership between researchers and local persons.

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