Some interesting facts on alcohol consumption

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1. A standard glass of alcoholic drink contains approximately 10 grams of ethyl alcohol. A standard glass represents 285 mL for beer; 100 mL for wine; and 35 mL for gin.

2. Once alcohol has been consumed it takes about 45 minutes for the blood alcohol concentration (BAC) to reach its maximum. One standard glass leads to a maximum BAC of 0.2 g per litre of blood or a 0.02 per cent BAC.

3. The average lethal BAC is 4-4.5 g per litre.

4. In the average person alcohol is metabolized at a rate of about 8-10 g per hour by way of the liver breaking down about 90 per cent of the alcohol in the circulating blood.

5. 35% of Australians who drink alcohol do so at hazardous or harmful levels (2001 Australian National Drug Strategy Household survey)

6. During 1997:

   (a) 3,290 Australians died from injury and disease caused by high risk drinking, defined as more than four standard drinks per day for men and more than two standard drinks per day for women.

   (b) 70% of the 3290 Australians were male and most died from either stroke, cirrhosis of the liver, or road accident injuries.

   (c) High risk drinking was responsible for 72,302 hospital admissions with the average time spent in hospital exceeding 5 days.

7. In 2003 it was estimated that the total social cost of alcohol in the community, which includes the cost of alcohol-related violent crime and family breakdown, was in the vicinity of $7.5 billion per year.

8. Crime statistics for NSW alone show that for the 12 month period between September 2005 and August 2006, 342,341 alcohol-related crimes were reported to police.

9. From three National Health surveys carried out since 1995, the proportion of males who drank at risky levels (more than 28 drinks per week) increased from 10.3% to 15.2% (47% increase); and the proportion of females who drank at risky levels (more than 14 drinks per week) increased from 6.2% to 11.7% (88% increase).

10. Under certain circumstances, alcohol consumption has been shown to be related to:

(a) decreased brain size

(b) increased risk of stroke

(c) increased risk of breast cancer in women

(d) increased risk of cirrhosis of the liver

(e) suppression of the immune system

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