



Alcohol Prevention and Treatment in Austria

Alfred Uhl

Which national data on the use of alcohol exist (consumption, costs, health damage)?

We annually collect available data and alcohol relevant laws and publish them online in:

- **Laws:** Uhl, A.; Bachmayer, S.; Schmutterer, I.; Strizek, J. (2018): Handbuch: Alkohol - Österreich: **Band 3 (from 2019 on Band 2)**: Gesetzliche Grundlagen 2017, 4. überarbeitete Aufl. (Onlineversion). Gesundheit Österreich GmbH, Wien
https://www.sozialministerium.at/cms/site/attachments/6/4/1/CH4004/CMS1305198709856/alkohol_gesetze_band_3.pdf
- **Statistics:** Bachmayer, S.; Strizek, J.; Uhl, A. (2018): Handbuch: Alkohol - Österreich: **Band 1**: Statistiken und Berechnungsgrundlagen 2018, 7. überarbeitete Auflage (Onlineversion). Gesundheit Österreich GmbH, Wien
https://www.sozialministerium.at/cms/site/attachments/6/4/1/CH4004/CMS1305198709856/handbuch_alkohol_oesterreich_band_1_2019.pdf
- **Selected Issues:** Uhl, A.; Strizek, J. (2018): Handbuch: Alkohol - Österreich: **Band 3**: Ausgewählte Themen, 6. überarbeitete Aufl. (Onlineversion). Gesundheit Österreich GmbH, Wien
https://www.sozialministerium.at/cms/site/attachments/6/4/1/CH4004/CMS1305198709856/handbuch_alkohol_oesterreich_band_3_0-fehler.pdf

Which national data on the use of alcohol exist (consumption, costs, health damage)?

- **Statistics** on **average consumption** exist and **adjusted data** from surveys (Volume 1 = Band 1) Survey data are adjusted, since surveys only cover less than 50% of the actual consumption.
- **Mortality data** are presented in Band 1.
- **Legal aspects** in Volume 2 (= Band 2 / presently 3).
- **Economic costs** and **mortality data** are **analysed and criticised** in Volume 3 (= Band 3).

Are there scientific studies, for instance, on the success of preventive measures concerning alcohol consumption as well as the abuse of alcohol?

- We **analyse existing literature and trends** – showing that the **situation continuously improved** and
- there are **some evaluation studies** concerning **alcohol at the work place**, but
- **no sensible evaluations** of **alcohol specific prevention programs**.
- It makes **little sense** to **conduct such evaluations** due to **statistical power problems** (very large samples needed) and the necessity of a **long-term perspective** (the idea is to change the culture and this takes decades) anyway.

Which legal provisions and initiatives to avoid the abuse of alcohol do exist in your country?

- **Traffic laws,**
- **working laws,**
- **prevention activities** focusing on **all substance use** (state prevention centres),
- alcohol or substance abuse problem reduction at the **work place programs** (Sucht am Arbeitsplatz).

Are there special protective regulations for children and youths?

- Youth **protection laws** similar to **anywhere in Europe**

How is the care of alcoholics organised, what do you see as positive and what is problematic?

- Virtually **everybody** with **alcohol problems** needing treatment has **access to free inpatient or outpatient treatment** with rather **short waiting times**.
- There is **no interval** between **withdrawal and rehabilitation** yet.

Of which significance are psychotherapeutic interventions within the framework of prevention and early intervention and which role do psychotherapists have in the treatment of alcoholics, both as inpatients and outpatients?

- The **psychotherapy situation in Austria** is different to other countries.
- Psychiatrists or psychologists trained in psychotherapy do not consider themselves as psychiatric psychotherapists or psychological psychotherapists but as “**psychiatrists and psychotherapists**” or “**psychologists and psychotherapists**” and to become a psychotherapist through training is open to many **other professions** as well.
- Psychologists **employed** or formerly employed in **addiction clinics** or **outpatient addiction facilities** accept addicts readily in their private practices – **others** are commonly **reluctant to accept addicts** even if they are open to many different diagnoses.

What would in your opinion be a good environment for a moderate consumption of alcohol?

- I do not understand this question ...
- ... Restaurants, Pubs, Parties, private Homes

How should existing services for the treatment of alcoholics be developed further?

- There is a general **trend to diversify** addiction treatment for the **needs of different clients**
- ranging from “**harm reduction**” via “**controlled drinking**” through “**abstinence oriented approaches**”,
- from “**outpatient treatment**” to “**inpatient treatment**” and even to “**E-health approaches**”.
- At the same time, the **separation** between **different substances vs. alcohol** and between **men and women** is decreasing in importance.

What needs to change in your country in order to warrant this development?

- **Non-ideological patient oriented approaches** and
- **sufficient funding** to enable diversity.
- Sufficient **social support** – sufficient **social security**, automatic **health insurance**, support in **housing**, support to **find jobs** or **daytime activities** should be stepped up or at least kept as they are – but the **present tendency** is to **reduce these standards** in line with **populist claims**.
- Consequent **information towards responsible use** and **support for persons with alcohol problems**.
- It should **not** turn into an **ideological crusade against alcohol** – since this misses the **true causes**, **polarizes society** and **induces secondary problems** (**stigmatization** of users, an intolerant population that does **not support people with psychiatric and social problems**, **harmful beverages**, **illicit production**, **trade** and **smuggling**, etc.)