Written Question

Sarah Wollaston (Totnes, Conservative)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health

(1) what estimate he has made of the number of deaths (a) directly attributable to alcohol consumption, (b) where alcohol consumption was an attributable factor and (c) where alcohol consumption was named on the death certificate as a contributory cause in each of the last three years;

(2) what estimate he has made of the proportion of deaths from (a) oesophageal cancer, (b) colorectal cancer, (c) breast cancer, (d) pancreatic cancer and (e) liver cancer that were attributed to alcohol consumption in the last year for which figures are available;

(3) what estimate he has made of the number of (a) suicides and (b) accidental deaths that were attributed to alcohol in the last year for which figures are available.

Nick Hurd (Parliamentary Secretary (Civil Society), Cabinet Office)

I have been asked to reply.

The information requested falls within the responsibility of the UK Statistics Authority. I have asked the authority to reply.

Letter from Stephen Penneck, dated March 2001:

As Director General for the Office for National Statistics, I have been asked to reply to your recent questions.

Table 1 provides the number of deaths where an alcohol-related cause was (i) the underlying cause of death, or (ii) mentioned anywhere on the death certificate, either as the underlying cause or as a contributory factor, in England and Wales, for 2007 to 2009 (the latest year available). The National Statistics definition of alcohol-related deaths only includes those causes regarded as being most directly due to alcohol consumption, as shown in Box 1.

It is not possible to provide figures for the number or proportion of deaths from (a) oesophageal cancer, (b) colorectal cancer, (c) breast cancer, (d) pancreatic cancer or (e) liver cancer which were caused by alcohol, from the information collected at death registration.

Internationally accepted guidance from the World Health Organisation requires only those conditions that contributed directly to the death to be recorded on the death certificate. Medical practitioners and coroners are not supposed to record all of the diseases or conditions present at or before death, and whether a condition contributed is a matter for
their clinical judgment. Lifestyle and behavioural factors, such as the deceased's alcohol consumption, are not recorded.

Estimates of alcohol-attributable mortality for specific causes of death in England have been published in a collaborative report by the Centre for Public Health at Liverpool John Moores University and the North West Public Health Observatory. The report, titled 'Alcohol-attributable fractions for England: Alcohol attributable mortality and hospital admissions', is available at the following link:

http://www.nwph.net/nwpho/Publications/AlcoholAttributableFractions.pdf

Table 2 provides the number of deaths where alcohol poisoning was the underlying cause of death, where the intent was (a) intentional (suicide), (b) accidental, or (c) undetermined, in England and Wales, for 2009 (the latest year available). The figures do not include deaths caused by suicide, accidents or other circumstances where the deceased had consumed alcohol before the event, as this information is not routinely recorded in coroner inquest reports or at death registration.

Table 1: Number of deaths where an alcohol-related cause was the underlying cause of death, or was mentioned anywhere on the death certificate, England and Wales, 2007-09 (1, 2, 3, 4) Deaths (persons)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Underlying cause</th>
<th>Mentioned</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>7,042</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>11,988</td>
<td>2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>7,099</td>
<td>2008</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Once

Table 2: Number of deaths where alcohol poisoning was the underlying cause of death, by intent, England and Wales, 2009 (1, 2, 3) Intent (persons) Intentional 2 Accidental 179 Undetermined 8

(1) Cause of death was defined using the International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision (ICD-10). The specific conditions which are included in the National Statistics definition of alcohol-related deaths, and their corresponding ICD-10 codes, are shown in Box 1. (2) Deaths were included where an alcohol-related cause was the underlying cause of death, or was mentioned anywhere on the death certificate, either as the underlying cause or as a contributory factor.

(3) Figures for England and Wales include deaths of non-residents.

(4) Figures are for deaths registered in each calendar year.

Box 1: National Statistics definition of alcohol-related deaths International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision (ICD-10) codes

Definition F10 Mental and behavioural disorders due to use of alcohol G31.2 Degeneration of nervous system due to alcohol G62.1 Alcoholic polyneuropathy L42.6 Alcoholic
cardiomyopathy K29.2
Alcoholic gastritis K70
Alcoholic liver disease K73
Chronic hepatitis, not elsewhere classified K74
Fibrosis and cirrhosis of liver (Excluding K74.3-K74.5 - Biliary cirrhosis) K86.0
Alcohol induced chronic pancreatitis X45
Accidental poisoning by and exposure to alcohol X65
Intentional self-poisoning by and exposure to alcohol Y15
Poisoning by and exposure to alcohol, undetermined intent

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