

Promising Policies to Reduce Alcohol-related Harm

5.

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Regulating the price of alcohol



Presenters



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Presentation outline

1. ASPQ in brief
2. Webinar context
3. Presentation by Marianne Dessureault (ASPQ)
4. Presentation by Chantal Blouin (INSPQ)
5. Conclusion
6. Question period



Mission and vision



The **Association pour la santé publique du Québec (ASPQ)** is an independent, non-profit organization that brings together nearly 1,000 citizen and organizational partners to make sustainable health through prevention a priority.

Sustainable health is:

Greater health, for a longer time, in a healthier and safer environment, for everyone and for coming generations.

Publications

Publications available at www.aspq.org (Priorité « alcool »):

- L'alcool au Québec : une consommation soutenue par une norme sociale favorable (2022)
- L'alcool au Québec : opinions de la population et des organismes sur la norme sociale et les politiques publiques (2022)
- Politiques prometteuses pour réduire les méfaits de l'alcool (2022)
- Études de cas : Colombie-Britannique (0,05) et Loi de Sandy (Ontario) (2022)
- Portrait du marketing. Des stratégies pour tous les goûts (2021)



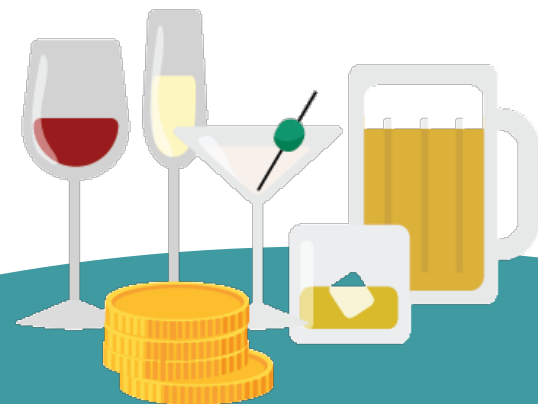
Webinar context

- Alcohol is a risk factor in a variety of social and health issues.
- Major costs.
- Measures put in place by various agencies in Canada and around the world.
- The collection of promising policies to reduce alcohol-related harm (2022) introduces 6 policies.
- Series of 5 webinars until April 27, 2023



Why talk about pricing?

- Attraction of prices for consumers
 - Influence purchasing behaviour
 - Influence consumption levels
- Diversity of strategies for lowering the sales price
 - Frequent and advertised discounts and promotions
- Recent debate about taxes on alcoholic products
- Complex minimum price policy



Several types of price promotions

- Promotions related to the price of alcoholic beverages aim to cut a product's price in the short term.
 - They directly affect the price of the alcohol by lowering it or giving the impression of a good deal.
- Many forms:
 - Offer of another product upon the purchase of an alcoholic beverage (cross-promotion)
 - Sales or discounts
 - Contests
 - Discount coupons
 - Tax payments
 - Reduction for multiple purchases (2 for 1)
 - Cashback

Examples of promotions



Examples of promotions



Current legislative portrait in Quebec

Sales price rules:

- Floor price for beer sold in grocery stores and convenience stores (grocery permit holders)
 - Prices vary according to alcohol content by volume
 - Prices indexed annually and [published](#) by RACJQ
- Applicable [specific provincial tax](#) on alcohol above GST and QST and [federal tax](#) on alcohol
- Prices of products sold at Quebec liquor stores (SAQ) are covered by trade agreements
- Policies subject to free trade regulations and trade agreements (e.g. [GATT](#))
 - Exception for health protection



Current legislative portrait in Quebec

Regulations governing price promotions:

- Prohibition of advertising that promotes irresponsible consumption (art. 2(4) [*Regulation respecting promotion, advertising and educational programs relating to alcoholic beverages*](#))

For example:

- Open bar
 - Ladies night featuring free alcohol
 - Beat the clock
 - 3 for 1 or 4 for 1
 - Cheap drinks (very low price)
- Regulation prohibiting on-site consumption permit holders from offering or giving a discount on the normal price (art. 9 of the *Act*)
 - Regulation prohibiting on-site consumption permit holders from announcing free drinks in its advertising (art. 10 of the *Act*)



What is being done elsewhere

With minimum prices:

- All Canadian provinces have minimum price policies on alcohol sold as off-sales or for on-site consumption.
 - Quebec and Alberta do not have any for all types of alcohol sold.
- For reasons of public health, other countries have adopted a minimum price policy:
 - [Scotland](#) implemented a minimum (or unit) price per alcohol in 2018
 - [Wales](#) in 2020
 - [Ireland](#) in 2022.

Table Illustrating minimum prices (\$) in 2017 in the other provinces (these prices may differ from current prices) by alcohol type

	Off-sales consumption				On-site consumption			
	Beer	Wine	Beer shandy	Spirits	Beer	Wine	Beer shandy	Spirits
BC	1.35	1.03	1.12	1.37	3.22	3.45	2.47	5.18
AB	-	-	-	-	2.39	1.76	1.98	4.32
SK	1.52	1.45	1.28	1.38	2.09	1.68	1.61	3.38
MB	1.37	1.22	1.27	1.27	2.25	2.16	1.61	3.38
ON	1.33	1.17	1.19	1.49	2.00	1.92	1.43	2.94
QC	1.36	-	0.93	-	-	-	-	-
NB	1.27	1.23	1.65	1.05	1.35	1.73	3.10	2.16
PE	2.17	2.05	1.94	1.51	2.50	3.45	2.45	3.45
NS	1.82	1.82	1.78	1.48	2.40	2.40	1.72	3.67
NL	1.83	1.72	2.12	1.47	1.65	1.91	1.13	2.34

*The data are taken from CAPE reports by province and territory from the Canadian Institute for Substance Use Research at the University of Victoria, <https://www.uvic.ca/research/centres/cisur/projects/active/projects/Canadian-alcohol-policy-evaluation.php>

What is being done elsewhere

Concerning price-related promotions:

- Since 2021, Ireland has prohibited promotions related to the price of alcohol, including discounts on multiple purchases, tips, cross-promotions and loyalty programs. ([Regulations 2020, S.I. No 4/2020](#))
- The Northwest Territories prohibits the distribution of discount coupons that can be exchanged to purchase alcohol. (*art. 72 Liquor Act*)
- Ontario's [guidelines](#) specify that price promotions based on the purchase of other beverages (promotions for multiple purchases, 2 for 1, half-price, etc.) and promotions targeting certain groups (students, women, etc.) are prohibited.

Presentation by Chantal Blouin (INSPQ)

Presentation of report

« Un prix minimum par verre d'alcool standard pour le Québec : estimation de l'impact sur les décès et les hospitalisations » (INSPQ, 2020)

(A minimum price per standard alcoholic drink for Quebec: Estimate of impact on deaths and hospitalizations)



Conclusion

Strategies to consider:

- Implement a standard minimum price per alcoholic drink for all alcoholic beverages sold.
- Prohibit offers of a promotional product with the purchase of alcoholic products (cross-promotion).
- Prohibit price promotions for multiple purchases (Happy Hour, 2 for 1, payment of taxes, etc.).
- Prohibit loyalty programs or coupons that can be exchanged for alcoholic products.
- Prohibit the advertising of price-related promotions.



Question period



To find out more

- April, N. et al. (2020). « Un prix minimum par verre d'alcool standard pour le Québec: estimation de l'impact sur les décès et les hospitalisations », *INSPQ*, https://www.inspq.qc.ca/sites/default/files/publications/2636_prix_minimum_verre_alcool.pdf
- OMC et OMS (2002). « Les accords de l'OMC et la santé publique. Étude conjointe de l'OMS et du Secrétariat de l'OMC », https://www.wto.org/french/res_f/booksp_f/who_wto_f.pdf
- WHO (2022). "No place for cheap alcohol: the potential value of minimum pricing for protecting lives" Copenhagen: WHO Regional Office for Europe, <https://apps.who.int/iris/rest/bitstreams/1435687/retrieve>
- Bartlett, O et A. Macculloch (2019). "Evidence and Proportionality in Free Movement Cases: The impact of the Scotch Whisky Case", *European Journal of Risk Regulation* 11(1) : 109-130, <https://doi.org/10.1017/err.2019.64>
- ASPQ (2022). « Politiques prometteuses pour réduire les méfaits de l'alcool », https://aspq.org/app/uploads/2022/04/recueil_pp_alcool-vc6922.pdf
- ASPQ (2021). « Portrait du marketing de l'alcool au Québec: des stratégies pour tous les goûts », https://www.aspq.org/nos-outils/portrait-du-marketing-de-lalcool-au-quebec/2020_rapport_4p_alcool_aspq_z/
- RACJ (2020). *Promotion et publicité en matière de boissons alcooliques*, <https://www.racj.gouv.qc.ca/communications/messages-aux-titulaires-de-permis-et-licences/detail/promotion-et-publicite-en-matiere-de-boissons-alcooliques.html>



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