

# **Alcohol in the north east- briefing paper**

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## ALCOHOL IN THE NORTH EAST- BRIEFING PAPER

### Alcohol consumption in the UK

Evidence suggests that alcohol consumption across the UK has increased sharply in recent years<sup>1</sup>:

- Young women's drinking has increased by 66%, on average, since 1992. Young men's drinking has increased 25% in the same period.
- The overall proportions of men and women drinking very heavily (50 and 35+ units respectively) have remained stable. However the numbers of 16-24 year olds drinking at levels consistent with hazardous drinking is increasing significantly. In 2000, 9% of all 16-24 year old women drank heavily (nearly triple the figure in 1988). For 16-24 year old men, there was still an increase (to 14%), but was a more modest rise of 30%.

The UK has one of the highest proportions of binge drinking, particularly amongst young people, and one of the worst problems with underage drinking.

Evidence from 3 major reviews for the effect of alcohol suggests that the number of deaths attributable to alcohol is 43-54% of unspecified liver disease.

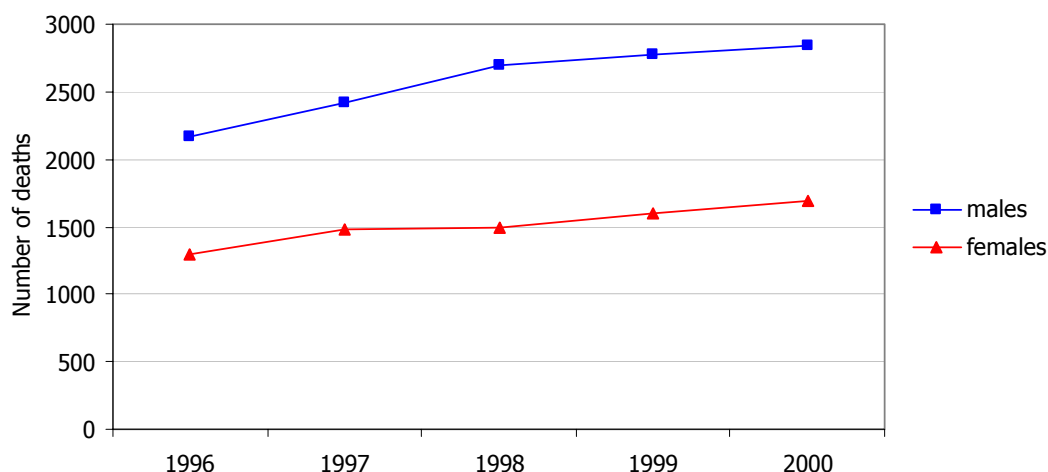
### Deaths from liver disease and cirrhosis (ICD9 571.0-571.5, 571.9)

**Source ONS Births & Deaths File 1996-2000**

63% of deaths from cirrhosis & liver disease in England & Wales between 1996 and 2000 were in men.

Deaths from liver disease and cirrhosis have increased by 31% in both men and women in the five years between 1996 and 2000.

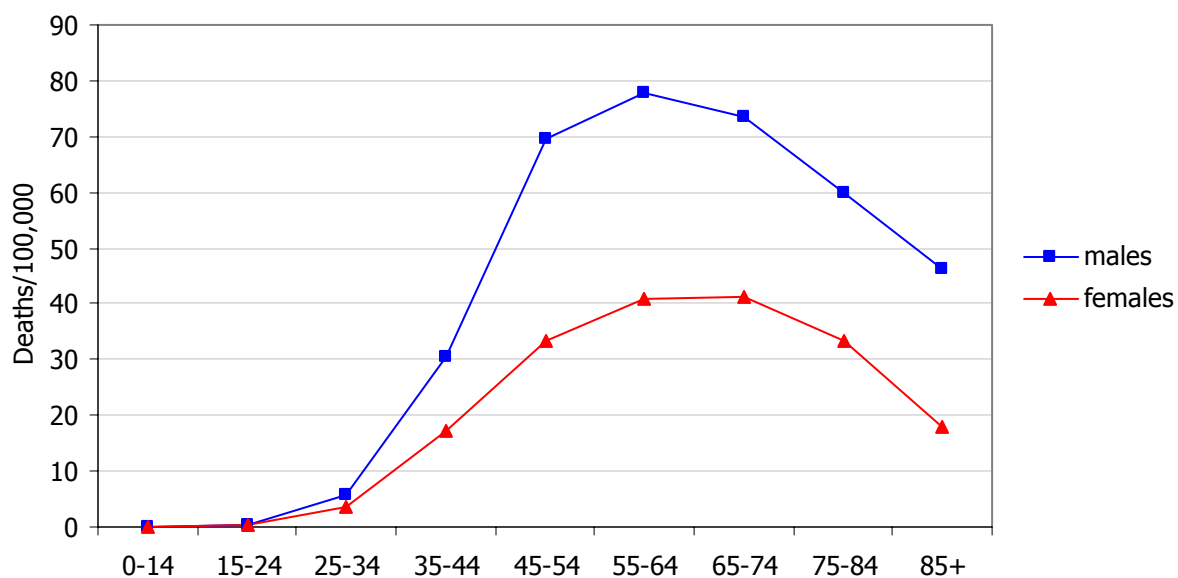
**Total number of deaths from liver disease and cirrhosis**



<sup>1</sup> Scoping Note "Project on tackling the harm associated with alcohol misuse" 2002, Cabinet Office Strategy Unit

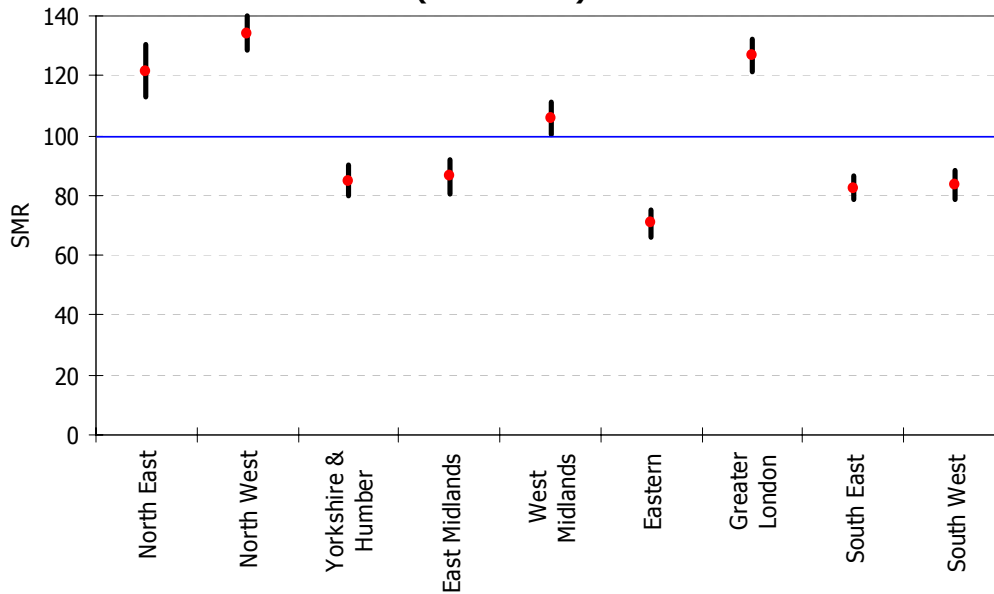
Men aged 55-64 years and women aged 65-74 years had the highest death rates from liver disease (78 per 100,000 population and 41 per 100,000 population respectively).

### Crude death rates from liver disease & cirrhosis



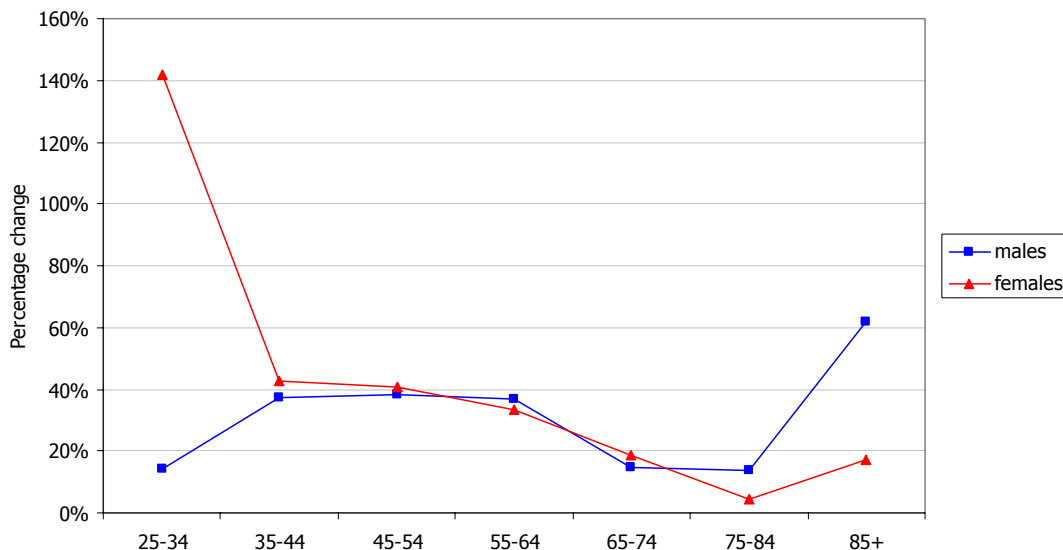
There are significant differences in the death rate between Government Office Regions, with the North East, North West and London all significantly above the average death rate for England & Wales.

**Mortality from liver disease & cirrhosis by GOR (1996-2000)**



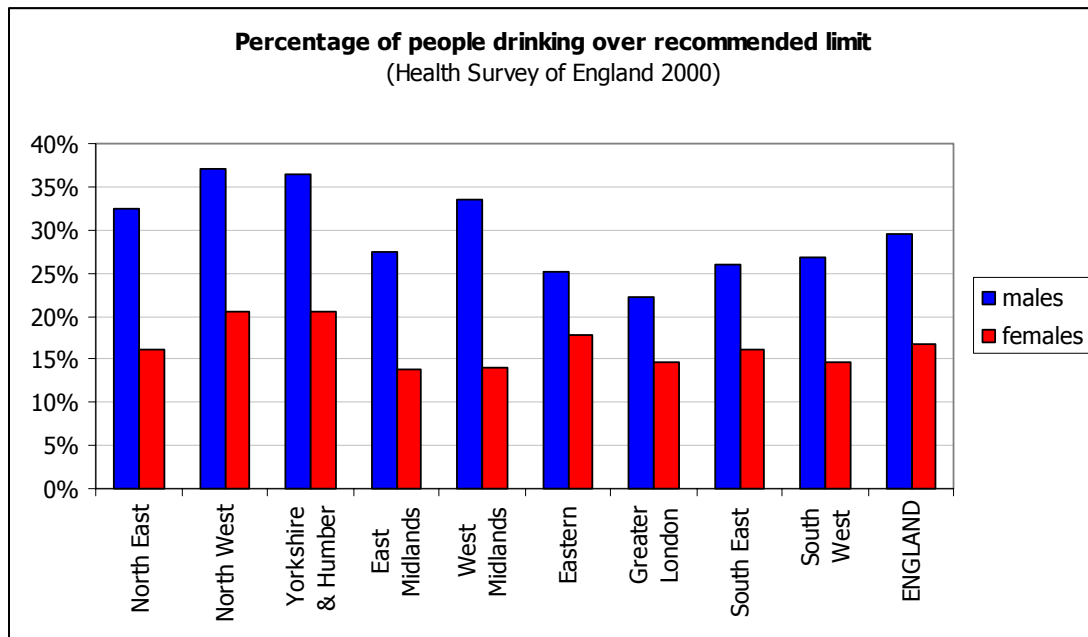
Whilst the overall percentage increase in deaths from liver disease is the same for males as females, the change within age groups is marked between males and females. Numbers of deaths by age group are small, however the number of deaths from liver disease for young women aged 15-34 increased by 146% between 1996-2000 (from 26 deaths in 1996 to 64 deaths in 2000). The number of deaths for men in the same age group increased by 12% in the same period (from 65 deaths to 73 deaths). The increase in deaths in younger women mirrors their increased drinking patterns.

**Percentage change in number of deaths between 1996 and 2001**

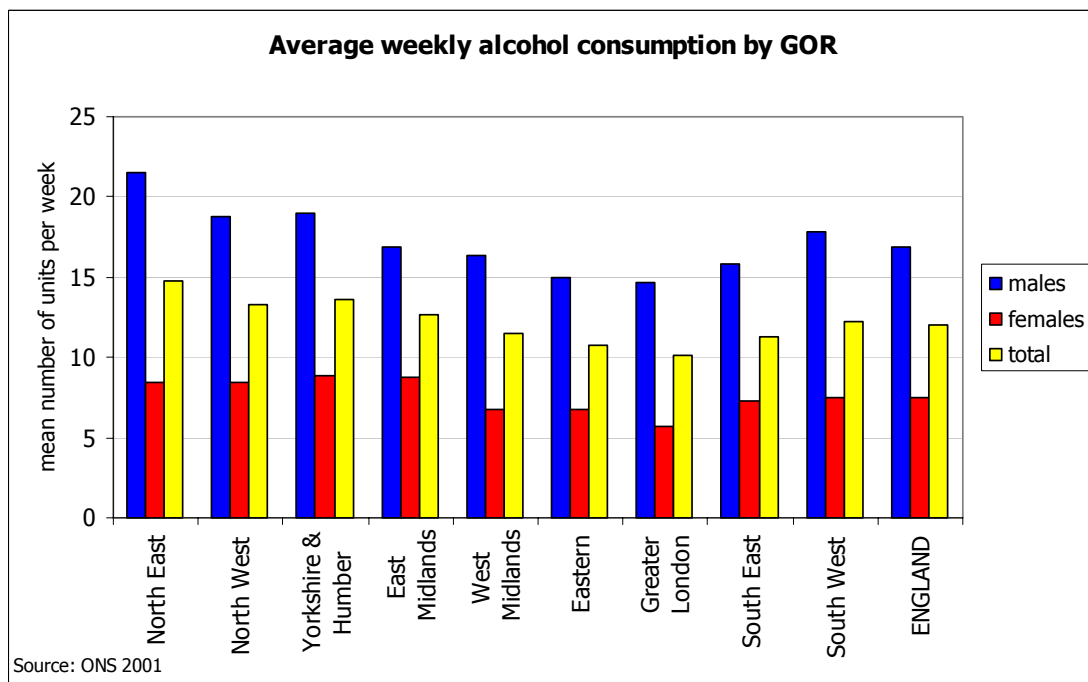


## Drinking Patterns

Health Survey for England 2000 indicates that the number of people drinking over their safe recommended weekly limits is over 45% of all adults. Sample sizes are small, however, results suggest that in the North East, North West, Yorkshire and Humber and West Midlands regions, more males drink on average over 21 units (i.e. unsafe limits) than for England as a whole.



Figures from the ONS suggest that people in the North East drink more than in any other region.



## Alcohol-related Hospital Admissions

The number of hospital admissions for toxic effects of alcohol (ICD10 T51), filtered to exclude those people who are diagnosed with mental /behavioural disorders due to psychoactive substance misuse (ICD10 F10) have been examined for the North East and for England.

Only 4 years of data have been examined by PCT, however a clear trend is emerging of significant year on year increase in females.

### Percentage change in number of admissions (T51) since 1998

<b>England</b>	males	females
1998-1999	+4.4%	+18.3%
1998-2000	+8.1%	+26.1%
1998-2001	+2.1%	+32.7%

<b>North East</b>	males	females
1998-1999	-2.6%	+13.8%
1998-2000	+7.1%	+31.5%
1998-2001	+11.2%	+48.1%

## The Future

The NHS Plan stated that the DoH would have implemented a National Alcohol Strategy for England by 2004. The Cabinet Office's Strategy Unit is currently working with the DoH to develop a national strategy and has held consultations with regard to this strategy, and has identified the following areas for investigation:

- i) the cultural and behavioural issues around alcohol use and misuse
- ii) health: prevention, treatment and the impact on the NHS
- iii) crime, disorder and anti-social behaviour
- iv) the implications for vulnerable groups, including children
- v) education and communication
- vi) the shape of the market and market-based solutions
- vii) the economic costs and benefits of alcohol

The Unit will be producing an interim analysis on their consultation at some point in 2003 and this interim report and feedback will contribute to the final strategy.

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