

A high-angle photograph of a person lying on their back on a light-colored stone plaza. The person is wearing a white t-shirt, dark pants, and a light blue jacket. Their arms are raised above their head. The plaza is composed of large, rectangular stone tiles. The lighting is bright, casting a shadow of the person onto the ground.

Communicating risk to the public

NordAN, Oslo, November 7 2024

About me

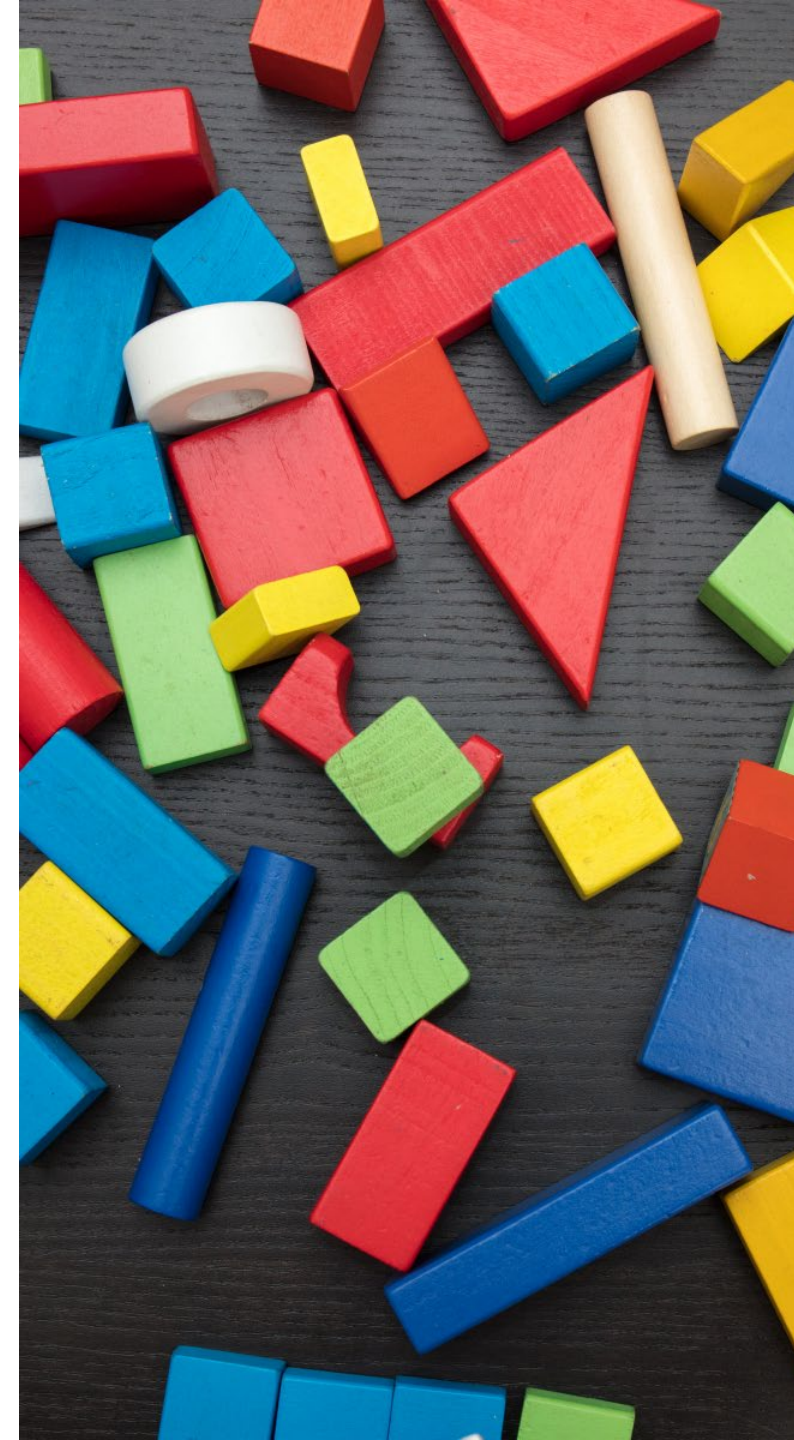
- Head of Communications at Nordic Welfare Centre
- Have been in the field of alcohol and/or illicit drugs for a really long time
- Today with communications on social and health issues in the Nordics



This presentation will touch upon

- What is communication?
- Why do we communicate?
- Problems with communicating to the public
- Problems with communicating risks
- Problems with communicating risks from alcohol consumption
- Some examples
- Some advice

You will get the slides, just raise a hand for clarifying questions, time for questions at the end of my presentation.



The Nordic Council of Ministers consists of the Ministers for Nordic Co-operation, **ten ministerial councils** covering different sectors and **one ad hoc** Council of Ministers for Digitalisation. They are supported by 16 committees of senior officials and a high-level group (digitalisation).



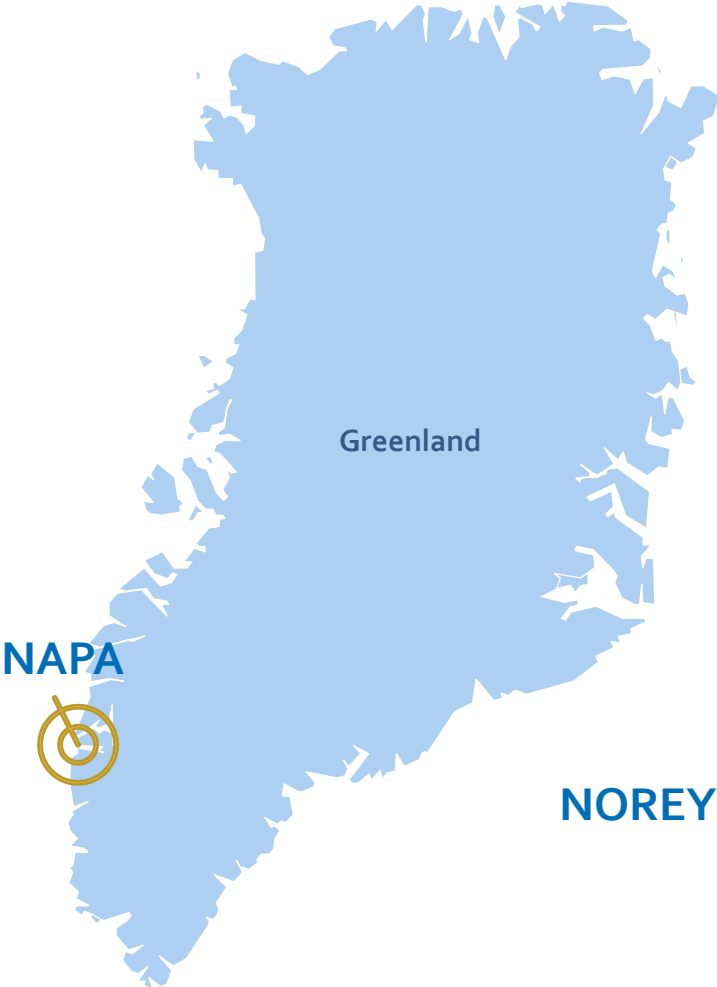
The **Secretary General** is responsible for the day-to-day running of inter-governmental co-operation.


12 Nordic institutions and three Baltic offices

Nordic Council of Ministers



The Nordic Institutions





Children & young people



Public health

Knowledge about public health in the Nordic region



Disability issues

Knowledge about disability issues in the Nordic region



Welfare technology



Aging in the Nordic region

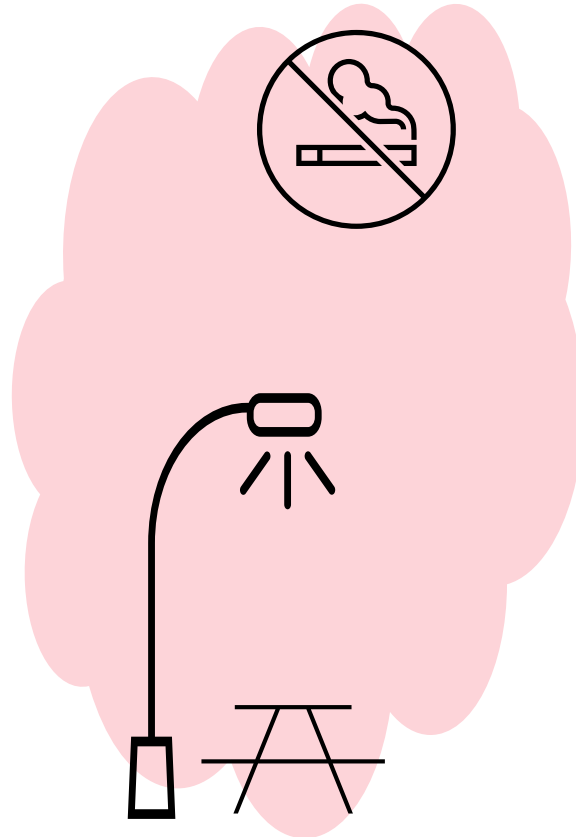
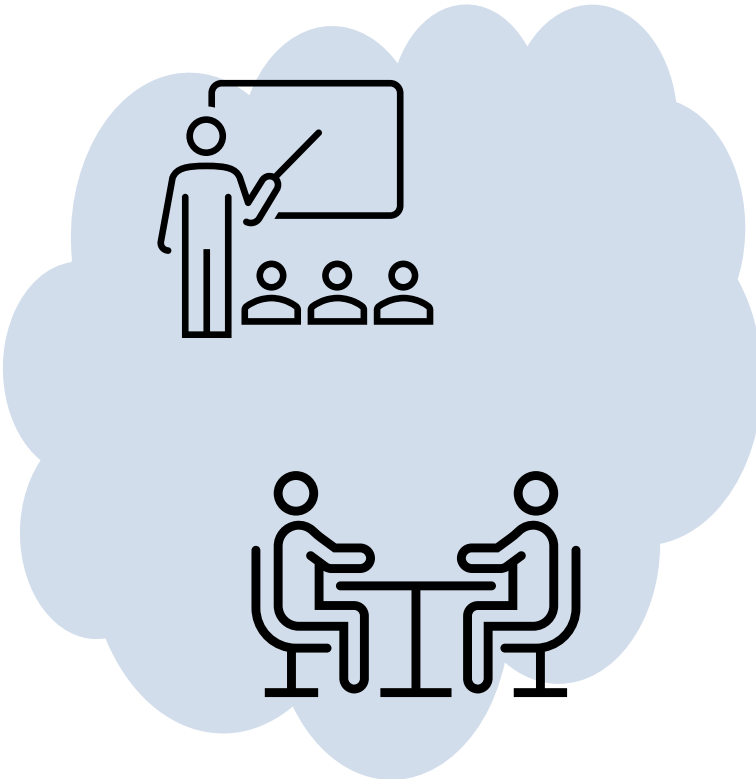


Integration

Exchanging knowledge and experiences on integration in the Nordic countries



To influence and affect attitudes and behavior



Different purposes

- Providing information
- Informing
- Communicating
- **Increase knowledge**
- **Change attitudes**
- **Behavior change**



Different problems Different solutions

Littering is not mainly a communications problem. We know it is wrong. But we need paper bins. It does not matter how much we inform, if it is hard to dispose of our garbage.

An individual *who wants to* keep the alcohol consumption at a low risk level, needs to know what that level is. Communication could make all the difference.



33 cl
starköl

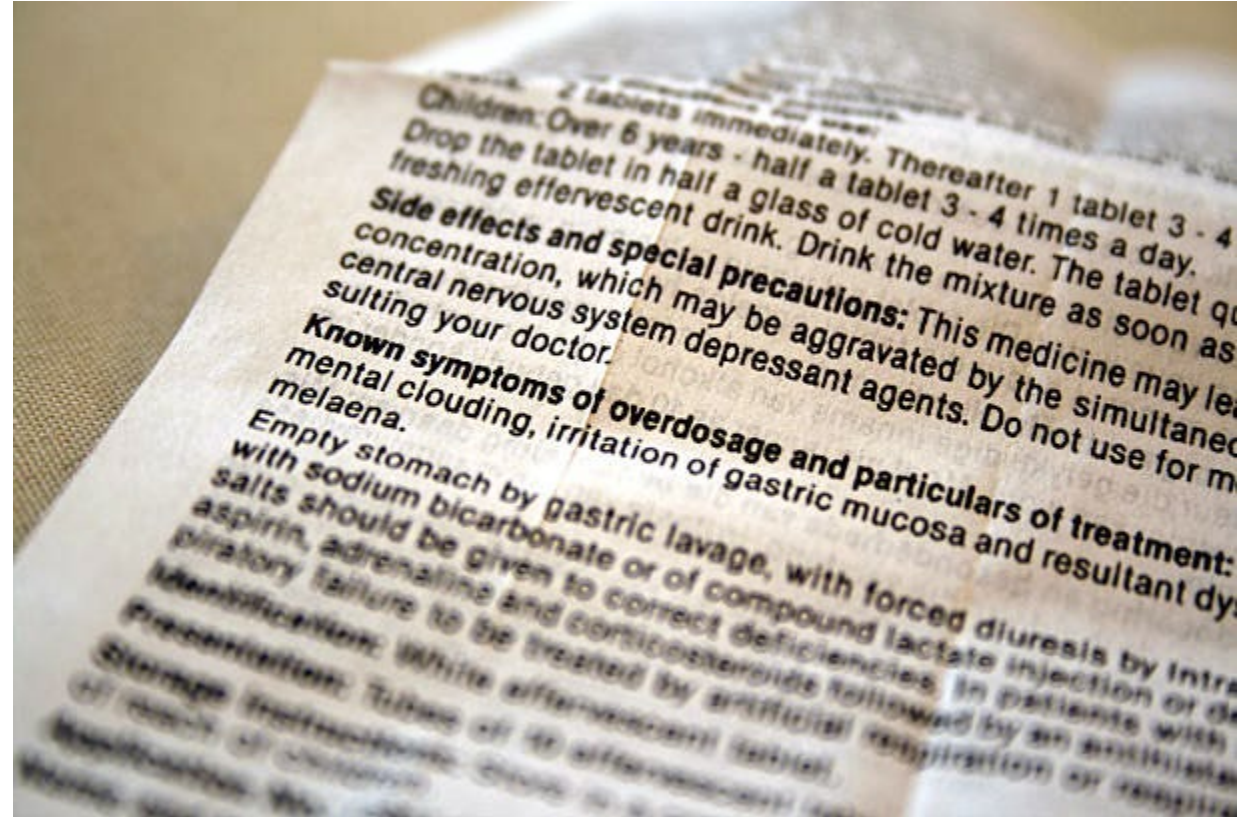


1 glas rött
eller vitt vin
(10-15cl)



Problems with communicating to the public

- Relevance
- Response
- Hard to reach
- Expensive
- Difficult to measure



Problems with communicating risks

- “Personal risk” is perceived and assessed differently from the risk to “people in general”
- Messages targeting a specific audience are communicated to the public





Problems with communicating risks from alcohol consumption

- Message not popular
- Complex to communicate
- Perceived control
- Low risk perception
- Misinformation





Increase public awareness of the links between alcohol and cancer

*Swedish Government strategy for alcohol, drugs, doping and tobacco policy and
gambling 2022-2025*

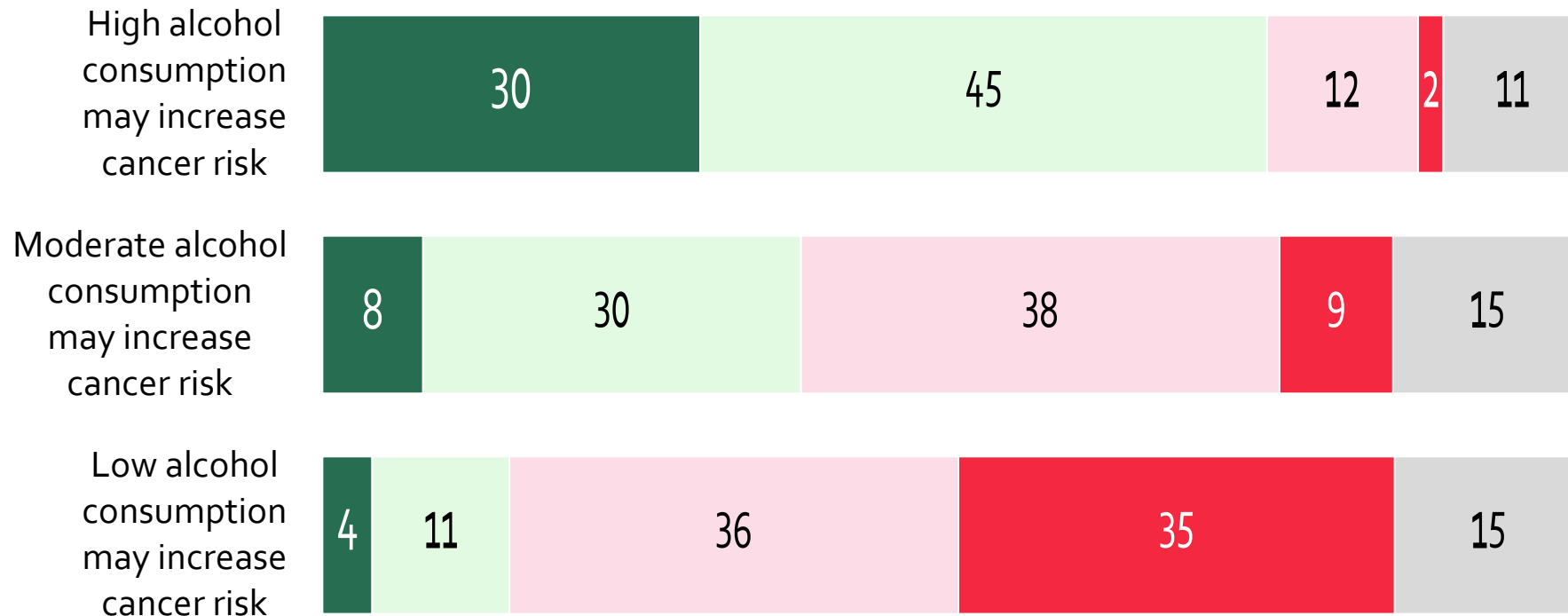


What do Swedes know about the links between alcohol consumption and cancer?



How do you respond to the following statements?

■ Very true ■ Quite true ■ Not very accurate ■ Not true at all ■ Do not know



More women agree that high (77%) and moderate (41%) alcohol consumption can increase the risk of cancer compared to men (72% and 36% respectively), but **for low consumption there is no difference between men and women.** The youngest men are more likely than older men to agree with all statements.





If you knew that drinking any amount of alcohol increases the risk of cancers such as breast cancer and prostate cancer, would that affect your behavior in relation to your own alcohol consumption?



Share (%) who would change their own behavior, if they had known the risks

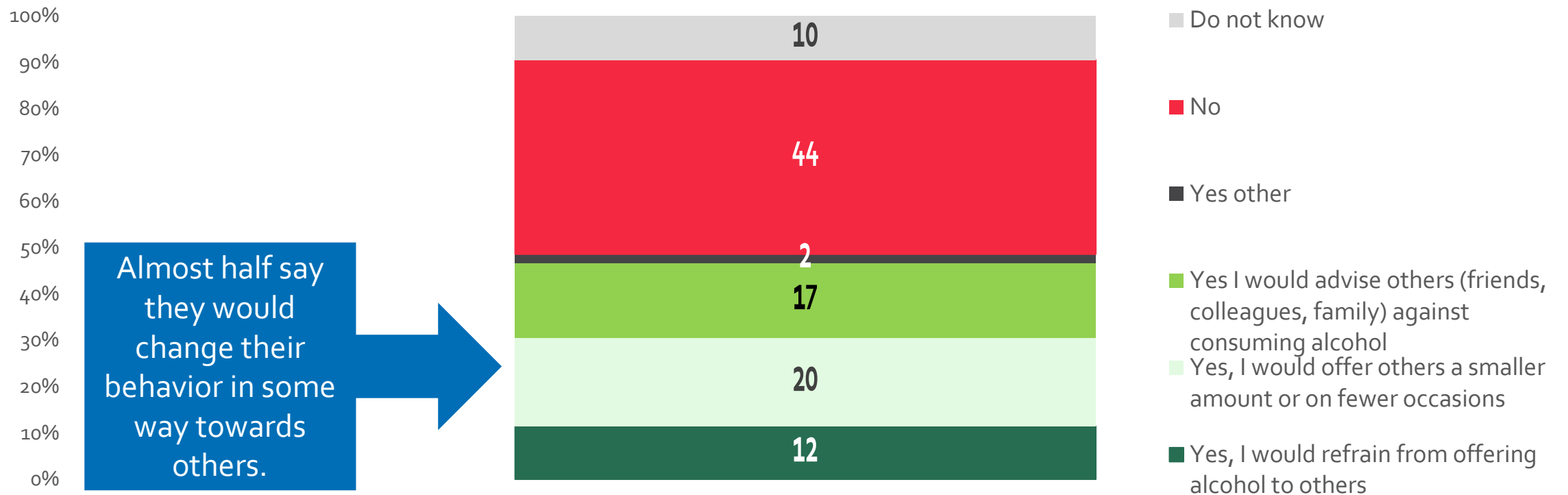




If you knew that drinking any amount of alcohol increases the risk of cancers such as breast cancer and prostate cancer, would that affect your behavior towards others related to alcohol consumption?



Share (%) who would change behavior towards others, had they known the risks



Awareness of alcohol as a risk factor for cancer has increased

- Two out of three believe that alcohol consumption increases the risk of cancer. In the survey 2023, more people believe that alcohol consumption increases the risk of cancer than dietary habits and overweight/obesity. 2022 it was the other way around. In other words, **alcohol consumption has “moved up” in the list of risk factors.**
- Slightly more people believe that alcohol increases the risk of cancer in 2023 (66%) compared to 2022 (63%). **Awareness has increased among both men and women, but the increase is mainly driven by the youngest and oldest age groups.** Men continue to agree to a lesser extent than women.



What caused the increased awareness?

- ?
- Media coverage
- Awareness campaigns on alcohol and cancer globally, in Europe, nationally

RCC, Beroendecentrum Stockholm, Beteendelabbet, Bröstcancerförbundet, CAN, Cancerfonden, Dietisternas Riksförbund, Folkhälsomyndigheten, IOGT-NTO, Sveriges Läkarförbund, Mun- och halscancerförbundet, Nationellt programområde levnadsvanor, Nätverket mot cancer, Sjuksköterskor i cancervård, Socialstyrelsen, Svensk Förening för Allmänmedicin, Svensk Sjuksköterskeförening, SLAN and Systembolaget.

- Doctor/patient?
- Other?
- All?

Alla har rätt att veta att alkohol ökar risken för → cancer





Control
No message



Responsible drinking
"Please drink responsibly"



General health harm
"Alcohol harms your health"



Cancer
"Alcohol causes cancer, including breast and colon cancer"
Warning presented in a red-bordered text box



Cancer with pictogram
"Alcohol causes cancer, including breast and colon cancer"
Warning presented in a red-bordered text box displaying a red hazard symbol and an exclamation mark



Cancer with graphic image
"Alcohol causes cancer, including breast and colon cancer"
Warning presented in a red-bordered text box displaying an image of a patient with cancer



12. Based on the label above, please answer the following questions:

	1- Strongly Disagree	2- Disagree	3- Neither disagree nor agree	4- Agree	5- Strongly Agree
This label is relevant to me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Seeing this label would prompt me to talk to my family and/or friends about the health risk associated with alcohol.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
This label provides all the information I would need as a consumer.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
This label is clear and easy to understand.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
This label is acceptable for alcohol products.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would try to avoid thinking about the label.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Seeing this label on an alcohol product would deter me from purchasing that item.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would prefer to receive the health-related message on this label via QR code.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
If there was a QR code included on this label as a link to more information, I would scan it with my mobile phone.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>





- Cancer warnings **increased knowledge** about the carcinogenic effects of alcohol
- Consumers perceived these texts as more relevant and effective compared to texts about other health risks
- Text variants with pictures, especially pictures of cancer patients, were perceived as less acceptable

Conclusion:

- Health warnings are an effective policy option to **increase knowledge** of alcohol causing cancer, with a generalisable effect across several countries.
- Europeans consider alcohol health-warning labels to be comprehensible and acceptable, with cancer-specific health warnings having the highest perceived impact and relevance.



Share (%) of the population agreeing with 7 statements about alcohol policies

Statement	Total	Men	Women
Police should have the power to carry out random sobriety checks on drivers even without suspicion of drunk driving	93	92	94
Education and information should be the main strategy to reduce alcohol-related harm	93	93	93
Warnings about the risks of alcohol should appear on alcohol packaging	77	71	84
Alcohol advertising should be banned	75	69	80
The number of shops selling alcohol should be kept low to reduce alcohol-related harm	69	61	77
There should be restrictions on how late at night you can buy alcohol	67	61	74
The price of alcohol should be high to reduce alcohol-related harm	61	53	69



Maybe not conclusions but at least some advice.



Tailor the messages – risk for what?



Enable informed decisions to be made



Who am I talking to? Who else is listening?



Use a sender with high credibility



The doubters – what can they not argue against?



Be persistent



Questions to contemplate



How do we effectively convey health risks to the public, especially given the challenges of information overload?



What role can alcohol guidelines play in promoting healthier choices?



Can we view these recommendations and guidelines as supporting frames for alcohol policies?



Nordic Welfare
Centre



Tak. Takk. Tack. Kiitos.

Questions?

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