



Britain's Office for National Statistics has reported a sharp and alarming rise in the number of people dying from alcohol abuse. Binge drinking has become part of British culture and is now a serious social issue - people are literally drinking themselves to death. The figures are of near epidemic proportions. Alcohol-related fatalities among British adults doubled from 4,144 in 1991 to 8,758 in 2006. The steepest increase was the 132 percent rise in deaths among men in the 35 to 54 age bracket. They are suffering from liver failure and stomach cancers at a younger age than ever before. The figures for women in the same age group also show a dramatic rise of over 100 percent. These disturbing figures seem to be a legacy of people partying and drinking heavily in their twenties and early thirties.

Professor Ian Gilmore, a leading British doctor, said: "Liver disease is often symptom-less until it becomes very serious, and so people often have no warning that they are destroying their liver until it is almost too late." Frank Sodden from the group Alcohol Concern called for immediate action: "It is vital that the government finally starts investing more in alcohol treatment to help problem drinkers address these issues before the situation becomes irretrievable," he said. Britain's public health minister Dawn Primarolo said the government was launching a \$20m campaign to raise awareness of the dangers of too much alcohol, and was reviewing alcohol pricing and advertising. However, she warned: "We know we're not going to change people's attitudes to alcohol overnight - it's going to take time."

INTERMEDIATE

Binge drinking deaths double in 15 years

READING / LISTENING

TRUE / FALSE

Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- a. Alcohol abuse has risen in Britain over the past decade and a half.
- b. An alcoholic epidemic has broken out all across Britain.
- c. The age groups most affected are those in their mid-fifties.
- d. The cause of these deaths is people drinking in their teens.
- e. There are many obvious symptoms of liver disease.
- f. People often have no idea their liver is badly damaged.
- g. Britain's government has launched a ban drinking campaign.
- h. A government minister said attitudes could change overnight.

SYNONYM MATCH

Match the following synonyms from the article:

- | | |
|------------------|------------------|
| 1. alarming | a. sign |
| 2. issue | b. deaths |
| 3. proportions | c. top |
| 4. fatalities | d. consequence |
| 5. legacy | e. irrecoverable |
| 6. leading | f. problem |
| 7. symptom | g. thinking |
| 8. vital | h. frightening |
| 9. irretrievable | i. essential |
| 10. attitudes | j. numbers |

PHRASE MATCH

Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- | | |
|--|-------------------------------|
| 1. a sharp and alarming rise in the | a. proportions |
| 2. people are literally drinking | b. becomes irretrievable |
| 3. figures are of near epidemic | c. drinking heavily |
| 4. deaths among men in the | d. symptom less |
| 5. a legacy of people partying and | e. themselves to death |
| 6. Liver disease is often | f. 35 to 54 age bracket |
| 7. people often have no warning that they | g. overnight |
| 8. address these issues before the situation | h. are destroying their liver |
| 9. raise awareness of the dangers | i. number of people dying |
| 10. change people's attitudes to alcohol | j. of too much alcohol |