



A qualitative study exploring midwives' attitudes and practices of advising pregnant women about alcohol

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Presenter disclosure

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The presenter have nothing to disclose.

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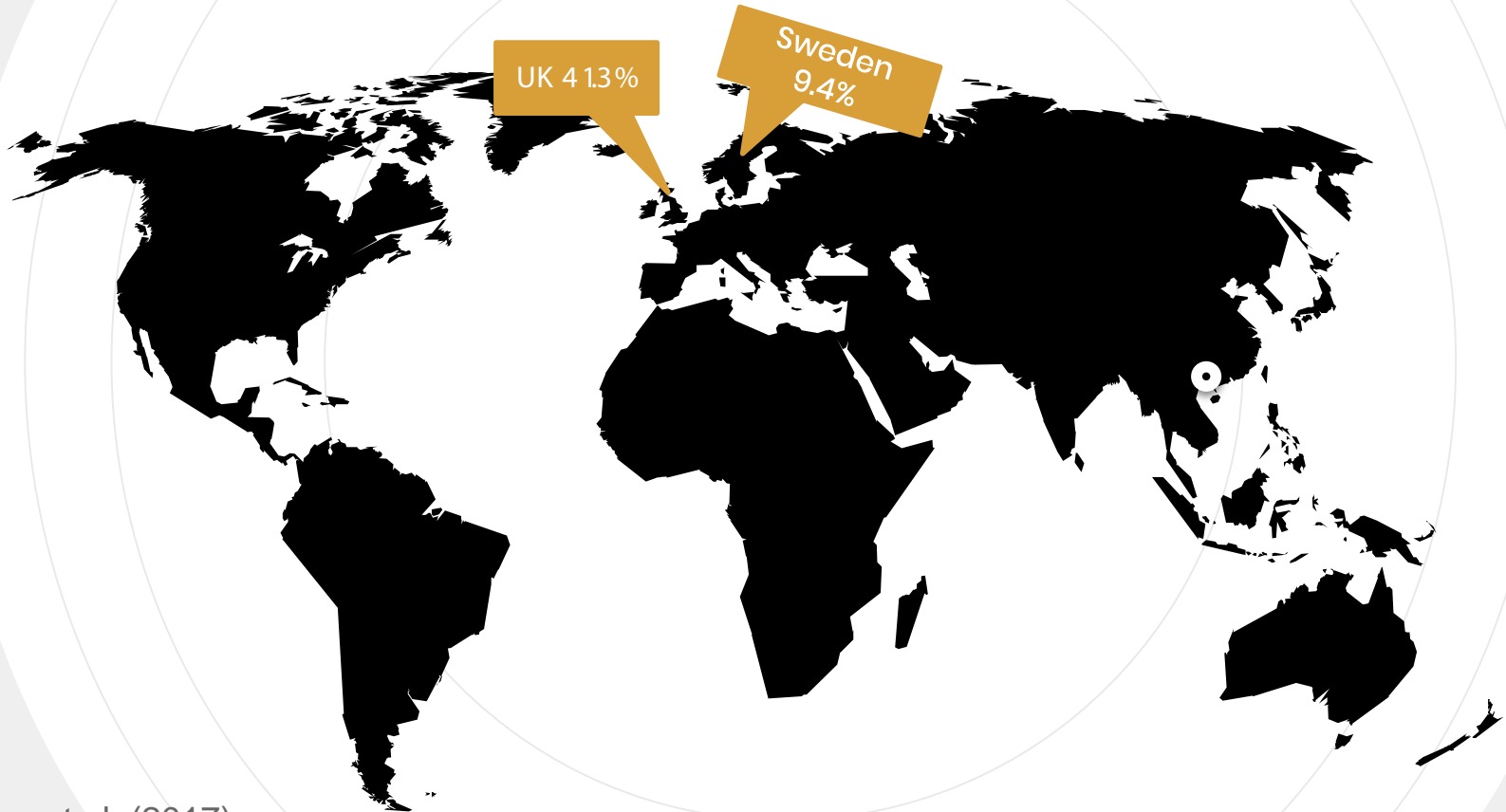
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Any alcohol use during pregnancy



Prevention in antenatal care

- Despite abstinence policy, some midwives still advise women that they can drink some alcohol
 - Reasons being lack of evidence or making exceptions for drinking at special occasions (Crawford-Williams et al., 2015; Kesmodel & Kesmodel, 2011; van der Wulp et al., 2013)
- Research from east England suggested not all midwives routinely asked about alcohol (60%) or provide information about alcohol and pregnancy (29%) (Winstone and Verity, 2015)

WHO (2014) guidelines outline that:

- All women should be asked about their drinking
- Women who are still drinking should be provided intervention or referred to specialist services



Methods

The aim of the study was to explore perceptions and practices of providing alcohol advice to pregnant women among frontline midwives in England and Sweden.

- Interviews with 16 midwives practicing in Liverpool (n=7) and Örebro (n=9)
- Swedish midwives all based in GPs, English midwives were community or hospital-based midwives
- Age range: 32-62 years
- Years of experience: 15-38 years
- Thematic analysis (Braun and Clark, 2006) and thematic network map



Pregnant women's lifestyles/promoting a healthy lifestyle

- Most women stop drinking; some English midwives questioned clients' honesty
- Partners rarely change their drinking habits – can be hard to engage
- Women's drinking in general was seen as a public health concern

I actually think that people drink incredible amounts. And it is shocking sometimes when you hear how young women drink. They are wasted (Swedish midwife 8)

In general I think alcohol is just a massive issue for this country and this region in general [...] massive public health issue isn't it (English midwife 1)

- Abstinence preferred as the advice to give to women
- Difference in interpretation of risk at drinking small levels
- Routine questions used in both countries – difference in how formalised they were

Well we know that the risks are but we don't know what level would be at risk, so I would give the information, I think that we should all be singing from the same hymn sheet (English midwife 7)



Antenatal practices

Midwifery role

- Discussing alcohol is part of the role – MI useful skill
- Relationship and trust important components
- Identified problem to advise women who drank before knowing about the pregnancy – guidance requested

I would really like to know what advice could be given to somebody say who've done it for about eight weeks. And maybe heavily. So I don't know what the implications of that are. So I should be able to give her that advice, you know, what we do
(English midwife 1)

I never say that it's not dangerous. I don't think I have ever said that, but you are very tempted. Because you want to do good
(Swedish midwife 7)



Discussion

- Cultural differences in risk perception seem to be part of both general public's attitudes and practicing midwives' (Schölin et al., 2017)
- Midwives support abstinence as a message – practical guidance for supporting inadvertent exposure needed
- Women want and do seek reassurance – equipping midwives to give good advice is important
- Media framing may both support and hamper abstinence guidelines (McCallum & Holland, 2017) – communicating the complexity of the evidence is difficult, clear communication in antenatal care is key

Small alcoholic drink a day during pregnancy 'has no effect on baby'

Pregnant women can have a small alcoholic drink a day without it harming the development of their children, a study has found.



BABY BOOZE How many alcohol units can you drink while pregnant, how many are safe and what's foetal alcohol syndrome?

There has long been a debate on whether expectant mums can enjoy their favourite tippie

By Jennifer Newton
8th January 2018, 3:11 pm | Updated: 13th February 2018, 1:28 pm



THERE'S long been a debate on whether expectant mums can drink while pregnant or should stay completely teetotal.

Here's everything we know about the guidelines on drinking during pregnancy...



g birth and boozing? The risks of drinking during pregnancy

research published about the harms of binge drinking while pregnant, what is the evidence for how much, if any, is too much



Mirror

NEWS POLITICS SPORT FOOTBALL CELEBS TV & FILM WEIRD NEWS TECH MONEY

Lover's secret boozing during pregnancy led to baby being damaged

Matthew Kaye can't talk properly, has difficulty walking due to curvature of the spine, could be autistic, suffers from learning difficulties

By Amanda Revell Walton
22:30, 9 JUL 2014 UPDATED 05:15, 10 JUL 2014



Pregnant? It's okay to drink two glasses of wine a week says study

PREGNANT women who drink up to two standard glasses of wine a week are unlikely to harm their unborn baby, a new study suggested.

PUBLISHED: 23:30, Mon, Sep 11, 2017



“I think we should all be singing from the same hymn sheet” – English and Swedish midwives’ views of advising pregnant women about alcohol

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ABSTRACT

Many countries have adopted abstinence guidelines for pregnant women, due to uncertainty around the risk of harm caused by small amounts of alcohol. There is a lack of research exploring frontline midwives’ attitudes towards alcohol use during pregnancy and comparisons of practices in different countries. Sixteen semi-structured interviews were conducted with midwives working in Liverpool, England ($n = 7$) and Örebro County, Sweden ($n = 9$). Data were analysed inductively, using thematic analysis with thematic networks. The findings show that all midwives believed pregnant women should be advised not to consume any alcohol during pregnancy and there is a need to tailor their approach to the individual. A key concern among midwives in both countries was how to advise about alcohol exposure that occurs before the pregnancy is known to the woman. English midwives discussed the uncertainty around the risk of consuming small amounts of alcohol, whereas Swedish midwives believed any amount of alcohol was associated with risk. Discussing alcohol was viewed as part of the health professional’s role, but routine questions for all women were perceived to aid discussions about alcohol. Future research should further explore the impact of wider social and political environment on midwives’ attitudes around risks with prenatal alcohol use.

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Alcohol; pregnancy; prevention; antenatal care; qualitative research

Introduction

Alcohol exposure during pregnancy is associated with risk of harm, relating to negative pregnancy outcomes and foetal development. These include miscarriage, pre-term birth, low birth weight and small for gestational age infants, and foetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD) (Bailey & Sokol, 2011; O’Leary, 2004; Patra et al., 2011; Riley, Infante, & Warren, 2011; Sokol, Delaney, & Nordstrom, 2003). Whilst the evidence of harm as a result of high alcohol intake is clear (O’Leary, 2004), there is a paucity of evidence regarding the risk of consuming smaller amounts of alcohol (Mamluk et al., 2017). Uncertainty about the threshold for risk has resulted in drinking guidelines recommending complete abstinence in many countries (Department of Health & Human Services, 2005; NBHW, 2014; NHMRC, 2009). To prevent and reduce harm caused by alcohol exposure, antenatal care is a key arena for prevention. International guidelines, published by the World Health Organisation (WHO), recommend that all pregnant women are asked about their alcohol consumption and provided with an intervention if they continue to drink during pregnancy (WHO, 2014).

Prenatal alcohol use is relatively common in Europe. Recent estimates show that a quarter of European women have consumed alcohol at some point during their

pregnancy. The rate of drinking, however, varies widely across countries. The UK, for example, has one of the highest prevalence rates (41.3%), while Sweden has one of the lowest (9.4%) (Popova, Lange, Probst, Gmel, & Rehm, 2017). Differences in prevalence may relate to the level of alcohol consumption in the general population, but official drinking guidelines could also have an influence. Recommendations regarding alcohol use during pregnancy in the UK were revised in the Chief Medical Officers’ (CMOs) Alcohol Guidelines in 2016 (Department of Health, 2016). Previous guidelines recommended abstinence as the safest option, though if women choose to drink, they should limit themselves to one to two UK units per week after the first trimester (NICE, 2008). The revised drinking guidelines now advise that alcohol should be avoided completely (Department of Health, 2016) and are aligned with guidelines in many other countries, including Sweden (NBHW, 2014).

Although many countries have adopted abstinence-based policies, research suggests a discord between recommended policy and practice. The proportion of midwives advising abstinence to pregnant women has been reported as 61% in Denmark (Kessmodel & Kessmodel, 2011), 93% in England (Winstone & Verity, 2015), and 99.4% in Australia (Payne et al., 2014). However, 41% of midwives in a study in England reported advising pregnant women to limit their alcohol

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Thanks!

Any questions?

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