

# **Media Coverage of NES Research "The Impact of Alcohol Consumption on Health in Russia"**

**Agence France Presse**

**March 23, 2010**

**Vodka drinking is top killer of Russians: study**

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Russia's heavy consumption of cheap, strong alcoholic beverages is the key factor behind the low life expectancy of its citizens, a leading Russian institute said in a study released Tuesday.

"Hazardous consumption of strong spirits is the main cause of high mortality in Russia," the Moscow-based New Economic School said in a statement announcing the release of its study. The average Russian drinks from 15 to 18 litres of alcohol yearly, less than citizens of some European countries, but drinking in Russia is dangerously skewed towards vodka, said one of the study's authors, Irina Denisova.

"In terms of the structure of consumption, strong beverages make up the main part and that is the difference from other countries," Denisova, a researcher at the New Economic School, told a news conference.

Drinking strong alcohol "reduces life expectancy by nine to 10 years on average," Denisova said.

Russian men have an average life expectancy of just 61.8 years, according to official government statistics from 2008, the most recent year for which data are available. Experts at the news conference urged authorities to raise the price of vodka in order to encourage Russians to drink less of it.

"In the short term it would be rational to replace vodka consumption with that of wine and beer," said Yevgeny Gontmakher, an expert at the Institute for Contemporary Development, a think tank that advises President Dmitry Medvedev.

Medvedev has sought to rein in rampant alcoholism, but previous anti-alcohol initiatives have proved unpopular among the Russian population.

**Associated Press**

**March 23, 2010**

**Researchers blame Russian drinking on \$3 vodka**

**By NATALIYA VASILYEVA**

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The government-approved minimum retail price for a half-liter bottle of vodka is currently 89 rubles (\$3), considerably lower than in Europe, and about two-thirds of deaths in car accidents in Russia are alcohol-related.

New Economic School (NES) has recently compiled a research based on data by a governmental agency which surveyed 10,000 people across Russia between 1994 and 2008.

Data shows that heavy drinking cuts average life expectancy in Russia by up to 10 years, NES Professor Irina Denisova told a news conference.

Recent government statistics have indicated that as much as 18 liters of alcohol per capita is consumed in Russia every year. Many scientists gave little credence to the figures after the government failed to provide explanation for the estimate.

Alexander Nemtsov, a department chief at the Moscow Research Institute of Psychiatry, who believes that the true figure of alcohol consumption is closer to 15 liters a year, insisted that the government has set too ambitious plans when it set out to cut consumption to 8 liters within the next ten years.

"It is impossible to drastically cut consumption in the next 15-20 years in the current social and political conditions and with the level of poverty we have," Nemtsov said. While 2 to 5 percent of men are believed to be alcoholics in Russia, as much as 40 percent of men drink excessively.

Russia's northern European neighbors Sweden, Finland and Norway have managed to drastically cut alcohol consumption over the past decades by hiking excise duties and limiting alcohol sales.

Russia's parliament has recently raised excise duties on beer but left vodka duties almost unchanged. While excise duties for one liter of alcohol in neighboring Baltic states average euro12 (\$16.2), they are less than euro4.5 in Russia.

Duma deputy Vladimir Medinskiy, a supporter of higher vodka prices, insists that an abrupt rise in vodka taxes will be highly unpopular, and the government is not to blame for dragging their feet.

"People are against it," he said. "There is only one thing I can reproach authorities with -- and that's the lack of political will in taking a highly unpopular decision."

### **The Moscow Times**

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**businessweek.com**

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**Известия**

**24 марта 2010**

**От водки будет польза**

**Алексей Аронов**

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Эксперты предложили свои способы борьбы с алкоголизмом. Вместо повышения тарифов ЖКХ следует поднять акцизы на крепкое спиртное. А производителей и продавцов паленой водки нужно наказывать так же строго, как наркоторговцев. Такие неожиданные предложения прозвучали вчера на встрече депутатов и общественников, посвященной борьбе с алкоголизмом.

Для затравки собравшимся представили исследование Российской экономической школы, посвященное тому, как пьянство влияет на здоровье населения. Как и ожидалось, влияет оно отрицательно: частое потребление водки укорачивает жизнь на девять-десять лет и увеличивает вероятность заболеть на 17%.

Затем эксперты, среди которых были известный экономист Евгений Гонтмахер, депутат Владимир Мединский и глава правления Международной конфедерации обществ потребителей Дмитрий Янин, один за другим высказались в том духе, что государственная концепция борьбы с алкоголизмом была бы более эффективной, если бы в ней был взят на вооружение опыт развитых стран.

Борьба с "зеленым змием" пока не приносит видимых результатов, вздыхали собравшиеся. По мнению Мединского, пока она - нечто среднее между гримом и пудрой, которыми правительство пытается заретушировать проблему. А некоторые меры даже вредны. Так, минимальная цена на водку с 1 января 2010 года установлена на уровне 89 рублей за полулитровую бутылку.

- И потребитель это понимает так: речь идет о 50 рублях, а не о 100 рублях. Все это напоминает маркетинговую акцию, - возмутился Янин.

Раскритиковав Росалкогольрегулирование, придумавшее "рекламную" цену, эксперты попытались выяснить, почему у нас никак не могут ввести запрет на ночную продажу алкоголя. Вернее, такая возможность сегодня имеется у местных властей, а федерального закона нет.

- Кто против? Долго искать не нужно: торговые сети! - нашел виновников Мединский, после чего перечислил сразу несколько крупных ритейлеров, наживающихся, по его мнению, на "ночном" горячительном.

Получается, алкогольную политику у нас в стране диктуют торговые сети, сделал вывод депутат. А производители и торговцы паленой водкой чувствуют себя безнаказанно, хотя ответственность за эти преступления должна быть столь же суровой, как и за продажу героина, резюмировал Мединский.

В свою очередь, профессор Московского НИИ психиатрии Александр Немцов недоумевал, почему начиная с 2007 года в Госдуме лежат десятки "антиалкогольных" законопроектов, но ни один из них не дошел даже до второго чтения.

- Будем иметь второй Ванкувер в области борьбы с алкоголизмом, - предупредил он. Так или иначе, эксперты сошлись в одном: вывести страну из запоя можно только с помощью повышения акцизов на крепкое спиртное. Этот рецепт, придуманный еще Всемирной организацией здравоохранения, давно взят на вооружение такими странами, как Великобритания и Ирландия. Там "благородное" виски губит людей не меньше, чем наша водка, поэтому на подобные напитки введены акцизы 25-30 евро на литр чистого спирта. В России, для сравнения, это 5,25 евро.

- Но это не значит, что крепкие напитки надо замещать легкими, - заметил Гонтмахер. - Иначе мы можем получить тот же объем потребления спиртного на душу населения, но только за счет пива и вина.

И предложил два собственных "ноу-хау". Первое - не продавать алкоголь гражданам, не достигшим 21 года. Второе - за счет повышения акцизов на горячительное остановить рост тарифов ЖКХ.

- Население тогда поймет: будет дороже водка - будешь меньше платить за квартиру, - подытожил он.

С таким вариантом никто спорить не стал. Осталось воплотить эту идею в соответствующий законопроект.

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