



# MICAP/AADIF

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## ALCOHOL AND ATRIAL FIBRILLATION

Many studies have documented the association between alcohol and the risk of Atrial Fibrillation (AFib). The latest study, conducted by the Karolinska Institute in Sweden, followed over 79,000 men and women without a prior history of AFib for 21 years. The findings were clear: Any level of alcohol use, even moderate levels, increased the risk of AFib. No level of alcohol use or type of

alcohol (beer, wine or spirits) was associated with lower rates of AFib.

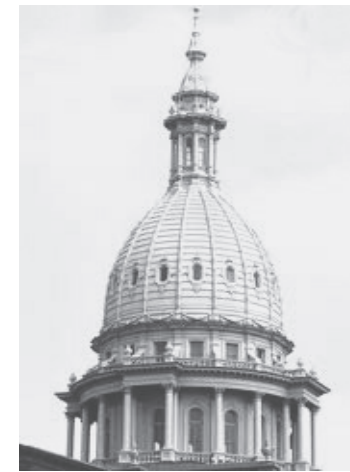
Source: Susanna C. Larsson, PhD; Nikola Drca, MD; Alicja Wolk, DMSc. "Alcohol Consumption and Risk of Atrial Fibrillation: A Prospective Study and Dose-Response Meta-Analysis," *Journal of American College of Cardiology*, July 2014.

## Your Gifts Make a Difference

MICAP is a small non-profit organization with a mission to provide information about the consequences of alcohol abuse, and to promote public policies that address these issues. It is a big task, sometimes in the face of opposing views, and for this work MICAP depends 100% on gifts from people like you. There are no fund-raisers or other revenues, just gifts and bequests, and an occasional

modest grant for a specific purpose. So, your gift truly makes a difference in this important work. Thank you.

A gift to MICAP (a 501(c)(3) organization) is 100% tax deductible to the extent allowed by the tax code.



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# MICAP RECAP

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## Almost 3,000 Michigan Deaths Annually Are Attributed to Alcohol

By Vernon K. Smith, Ph.D., Vice President, AADIF/MICAP

An average of 2,945 deaths in Michigan were classified as "alcohol-attributable deaths" over each of the 5 years from 2006 – 2010, according to a new study published in June 2014 by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

In Michigan, about two-thirds of the 2,945 annual alcohol-attributable deaths -- an average of 2,020 annually -- occurred among adults ages 20-64. Alcohol-attributable deaths accounted for 21,997 average annual deaths, or 9.2% from all causes for this 20 – 64 age group.

For each alcohol-related death, the study calculated the number of "years of potential life lost." Across all those in Michigan whose death was attributed to alcohol use, the average was 28 years. Looking specifically at those ages 20 – 64, the average was 34 years of potential life lost.

The latest data show that excessive drinking is the fourth leading preventable cause of death in the U.S. Excessive drinking includes binge drinking (which is 5 or more drinks per occasion for men, 4 or more for women), heavy weekly alcohol consumption (15 or more drinks per week for men, 8 for women), and any drinking by pregnant women or anyone younger than age 21.

Nationally, the CDC study found that excessive alcohol consumption resulted in an average of 88,000 alcohol-attributable deaths each year from 2006 to 2010. Across the U.S., alcohol-attributable deaths accounted for one in ten deaths from all causes for adults ages 20 – 64, and about 4% of deaths for all ages.

Of all alcohol-attributable deaths, a total of 44% were due to chronic conditions of which the most common cause was alcoholic liver disease. A total of 56% were due to acute conditions, of which the most common was motor vehicle traffic crashes, and also included falls, homicides and poisoning. Over 70% were males for both chronic and acute conditions.

This study was the first comprehensive analysis since 2004 of alcohol-related deaths and "years of potential life lost" in the U.S. and across each state.

Commenting on the findings of the study, lead researcher Mandy Stahre told *HealthDay Reporter* that people often link drinking with deaths from motor vehicle accidents and chronic liver disease, but many other conditions that cause death are tied to alcohol. "Excessive drinking is associated with a lot more causes of death than what we tend to focus on. Alcohol intake plays a role in at least 54 different conditions linked to death." Among such conditions are acute pancreatitis, psychosis, esophageal cancer, breast cancer, oral cancer, falling injuries, suicide and drowning. "Binge drinking is associated with 51 percent of all deaths due to excessive drinking [and binge drinking] does not mix well with swimming or boating."

James Garbutt, a professor and research scientist at the Bowles Center for Alcohol Studies at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, commented on the new study to *HealthDay Reporter* that "one doesn't have to be an alcoholic to experience the negative consequences of alcohol."

He added: "Moderation is very important," as well as a person's personal health history. For example, "If you are a woman with a breast cancer history in the family, you may want to think even more about what role alcohol should have in your life."

## Alcohol Attributed Deaths (continued)

This article was prepared by Vernon Smith based on: Stahre, Roeber, Kanny, Brewer and Zhang, "Contribution of Excessive Alcohol Consumption to Deaths and Years of Po-

tential Life Lost in the United States." *Preventing Chronic Disease*, CDC, June 2014; and a news report on the study in *HealthDay Reporter*, June 26, 2014.

## NEWS AROUND MICHIGAN

**KALAMAZOO, MI** — Stores opening to sell beer and wine in Kalamazoo will have to adhere to new spacing requirements adopted Monday, **June 2, 2014 by the Kalamazoo City Commission.**

City commissioners unanimously approved an ordinance proposal regulating distance between new stores that open to sell beer and wine in **Kalamazoo.**

Before the vote, Mayor Bobby Hopewell disclosed that he is part owner of Salut Fine Wine & Spirits, a store that sells beer, wine and liquor on Gull Road in Comstock Township. Hopewell said he would vote in favor of the ordinance with the disclosure, after checking with City Attorney Clyde Robinson to make sure it was not a conflict of interest.

Though commissioners unanimously approved the amendment, the public's reaction to it was mixed.

David Mitchell, city resident and co-owner of Beer and Skittles, a store that sells beer, wine and specialty foods in Kalamazoo's Oakwood neighborhood, said he and his wife have thought about opening a store in the downtown area, but that the ordinance amendment could stunt their growth and prevent future growth for other stores.

"We consider ourselves to be good assets to the community," Mitchell said. "We like our store and we think our customers like our store. ... Reading through the changes, I think that it looks like all convenience or beer and wine stores are bastions of unrest in the community. That's just not true."

Mitchell asked commissioners to consider voting against the amendment, saying a few locations potentially have problems but the amendment is "essentially penalizing future businesses for no purpose other than these few businesses right now behaving in a certain way."

Kalamazoo resident Max Tibbits said he strongly supported the ordinance, saying it puts neighbors on an even playing field when normally residents have no say of what is coming into their neighborhood.

"What it does is give transparency and due process for all residents of the city and at the same time protects everyone's rights," Tibbits said.

City Attorney Clyde Robinson said new stores selling beer and wine would have to comply with the zoning requirements or can seek a variance.

City staff proposed the amendment in response to concern voiced by residents and organizations, including the Northside Ministerial Alliance, about an over-saturation of stores selling alcohol in the city.

"They were seeing a clustering of these convenience packaged liquor beer and wine stores" and secondary offenses that come along with that that were impacting the quality of life on the city's north side, Robinson said.

Under the amendment, new convenience stores and gas stations in the city that sell packaged alcoholic beverages for consumption off-site cannot be located within a half-mile of a similar store. Those businesses also cannot be located within 500 feet of a church or school.

The zoning ordinance amendment does not affect any of the 35 existing businesses that are licensed to sell packaged alcohol in Kalamazoo. It does not affect businesses that sell beer, wine and liquor, which are regulated by the Michigan Liquor Control Commission. Under MLCC regulations, businesses that sell packaged hard liquor must be located a half-mile from a similar store and must be located at least 500 feet from a church or school.

The MLCC does not regulate stores that sell beer and wine but not liquor. The ordinance amendment does not affect grocery stores.

The convenience stores already open in Kalamazoo draw calls to the Kalamazoo Department of Public Safety with incidents of fighting, excessive noise, property destruction and other criminal activity from people who consume alcohol bought from the store in the store's parking lot, city officials have said.

Several commissioners voiced their approval of the ordinance. Commissioner Stephanie Moore mentioned that some Hillside Middle School students who walk home down the Alamo Avenue hill pass two to three stores that sell alcohol on their way home.

"Not only do these liquor stores cluster all through the neighborhood, but look at the options our young kids have in food and drink choices at the stores," Moore said.

Commissioner Jack Urban said though the ordinance amendment is "not the most effective thing" the city can do to combat the over saturation of beer and wine stores, it's symbolic.

"How can we not pass this because of the symbolic impact it has to say the city is doing what it can under the restrictions of what ordinance power it has," Urban said.

Commissioner Bob Cinabro called the ordinance "temperate, reasonable" and not "over the top."

*Emily Monacelli covers local government and beer for the Kalamazoo Gazette. Contact her at [emonacel@mlive.com](mailto:emonacel@mlive.com) or follow her on [Twitter](#). Credit for this article is given to the Kalamazoo Gazette/MLive Media Group.*

## CAN POWDERED ALCOHOL BE A PAL?

By Rev. W. J. (Bill) Amundsen, Retired

An Arizona-based company named Lipsmark, LLC is seeking approval from the Federal Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau (TTB) for their labels for their distinctive beverage alcohol (B/A) products named "PALCOHOL" (powdered alcohol). Further, they have nick-named it "PAL," and in a previous website urged their constituency to take their "PAL" with them wherever they go.

We are told that the TTB approved the "PALCOHOL" label on April 8, 2014. On April 21<sup>st</sup>, 2014, however, TTB said their prior approval was an error and they rescinded that approval. The company indicates that it is working with the TTB to gain approval for a new label which is a precondition for marketing.

**CRITICISM OF THE PRODUCT** Senator Chuck Schumer of New York has been one outspoken critic of "PALCOHOL" because it would be sold in packets like Kool-Aid and/or "Crystal Light." Said Senator Schumer, "Palcohol would soon become the 'Kool-Aid' of teenage binge drinking."<sup>1</sup> We are also told, in the media, that Senator Schumer has written the US Food and Drug Administration requesting a BAN on "PALCOHOL" before it gets approved.

**WHAT IS PALCOHOL?** Some have said that "PALCOHOL" is freeze-dried alcohol. Not true! In an on-line Scientific American<sup>2</sup> interview with a PhD scientist, it is reported that the beverage alcohol is encapsulated by cyclodextrins (microscopic rings of sugar) which absorb "guest" molecules of the ethyl alcohol in their inner cavities. To make the powder, moisture is sucked out of the carrier (sugar). The super-dried sugar is then mixed with the ethyl alcohol and flavoring. Later, when the product is used, water is added. The water dissolves the molecular container (sugar). Presto, the beverage alcohol springs loose to become a rum, or a martini, or another B/A drink depending on the original flavoring absorbed by the sugar rings.

Some journalists have indicated that an early company web-site flippantly indicated that users could "snort" PALCOHOL. The company has removed those pages from their web-site claiming they were just experimenting with advertising. There were also suggestions on the original website that a person could take PALCOHOL into any venue (say a sports arena, a concert, or some other venue), and mix it with water instead of purchasing a drink at a higher price.<sup>3</sup> It would be cheaper that way.

**BEVERAGE ALCOHOL IS A SPECIAL PRODUCT.** MICAP has argued, since the repeal of Prohibition in 1933, that B/A in whatever form is a very special commodity. It is not like milk, orange juice or water. Because it is so different, and the consequences can be so dire, it needs to be handled without flippant comments and/or advertising. Because

Lipsmark, LLC even "toyed" with that kind of advertising, in my mind the integrity of the company is called into question.

**TWO PROSPECTIVE FORMULATIONS.** The Lipsmark Company website indicates the possibility of making powdered alcohol in two formulations: ingestible (a B/A formulation), and non-ingestible (an industrial formulation). I have commented on the B/A ingestible formulation above.

The non-ingestible formulation, however, may have some merit. The company suggests a variety of uses including windshield wiper fluid, an energy source (such as camp stove or military transport fuel), or as a medical antiseptic for remote locations.<sup>4</sup> We, at MICAP are not opposed to the non-ingestible formulation used for manufacturing and uses other than B/A.

As with all B/A products, MICAP is concerned about the abuse of such products by under-aged youth as well as adults. These abuses continue to contribute to beverage alcohol being the 4<sup>th</sup> leading cause of death in the US as well as contributing to illness, hospitalization, joblessness, family disease (including breakups and violence), rape, homicide and other injuries. Additionally, over 70% of Michigan's prisoners have been convicted of crimes committed under the influence of Beverage Alcohol and other drugs. B/A leaves, in its wake, a staggering social and financial burden for the citizens of the State of Michigan exceeding \$2 Billion dollars per year.

I urge our readers to contact your Senators and Representatives as well as the Michigan Liquor Control Commission and let them know you are concerned about abuses forthcoming if PALCOHOL is approved for sale in the State of Michigan. Handwritten letters are always better. Our legislators banned the admission of alcohol vaporizers in our state by legislation a few of years ago. They should do no less with PALCOHOL.

Contact information for our State Senators is:

P. O. Box 30036, Lansing, Michigan 48909-7536

Contact information for our State Representatives is:

P. O. Box 30014, Lansing, Michigan 48909-7514

Contact information for the Michigan Liquor Control Commission is:

P.O. Box 30005, Lansing, Michigan 48909

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