



SRI LANKA COLLEGE OF PSYCHIATRISTS

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Press release

The Sri Lanka College of Psychiatrists, being one of the foremost medical professional bodies involved in the management of substance use disorders, would like to raise our concern about the attempts to legalize online sales of alcoholic beverages in Sri Lanka.

1. It is an established fact beyond doubt that more the use of alcohol in a given population, higher the health care burden due to alcohol related illness.(1)

2. There is good evidence that ease of access to alcohol through online sales leads to higher use of alcohol when compared to in-person purchases at outlets. A recent study showed that there was 75% higher odds of heavier drinking when buying alcohol online while one in four people reordered alcohol once they ran out during the drinking session.(2)

3. It is likely that the removal of social restrictions and increased ease of access in online purchases will promote alcohol use in low prevalence groups such as occasional users and women.

4. Studies have also shown that online sales increase access to alcohol in underage persons as the process of monitoring buyers online have not been successful in countries where online sales exist. (2,3) It is unlikely that regulations and policies that have failed in many developed countries will succeed in Sri Lanka. Hence, initiation of alcohol use in young persons is a forgone and a highly negative consequence here.

Based on above scientific evidence, it can be anticipated that online liquor sales in Sri Lanka will increase the per capita consumption of alcohol and subsequently increase the burden of health care costs to the government, worsen the health of individual consumers, while at the same time promote use in underage persons. Therefore the Sri Lanka College of Psychiatrists strongly advocate against the legalization of online alcohol sales in Sri Lanka.

Dr.Gihan Abeywardena
President

Dr.Chamara Wijesinghe
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1) <https://bmcpublihealth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12889-019-7666-4>

2) <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7753625/#idm139943171651568title>

3) <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0168851021001901?via%3Dihub>