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Health and Sport Committee
T3.60
Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

Health and Sport Committee
CALL FOR WRITTEN EVIDENCE ON THE ALCOHOL (MINIMUM PRICING) (SCOTLAND) BILL

The Royal College of Surgeons Edinburgh would wish to respond to the invitation to comment on this bill and the supporting evidence. Our response is predicated on an assumption that establishing a minimum alcohol sale price based on units of alcohol will produce a downturn in excess alcohol consumption.

Intoxication from alcohol poses many health related problems, but in the field of surgical practice, serious injury from accidental and intentional trauma poses a substantial risk to health, quality of life and indeed life expectancy, with premature death associated with alcohol ingestion being a Scottish epidemic. Additionally, chronic diseases such as liver sclerosis and indeed acute and chronic pancreatitis are again provoked by excess alcohol intake and have high prevalence within Scotland in comparison to other nations. These problems are directly attributable to alcohol.

On the basis of these two considerations alone, we would therefore strongly support any measures that will contain alcohol ingestion. There is, of course, a more extensive menu of disability attributable to alcohol ranging from foetal alcohol syndrome through to the social consequences of alcoholism, but as a surgical college our immediate concerns are the direct and acute consequences of excess intake which we would hope that a pricing policy may diminish.

We note that the responses are invited to address the advantages and disadvantages of establishing a price policy and also the invitation to comment on the proposed minimum price. We have no views nor have we any evidence to contribute as regards the linearity of the relationship between minimum price and ingestion levels. However, we would support any measure that is effective in minimising the significant excesses that are associated with the injury pattern and disease profile referred to above.

David Tolley PRCSEd