Worldwide Trends in Alcohol and Drug Impaired Driving

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This paper will summarize the latest trends in a number of industrialized countries around the world and discuss the reasons for the changes that occurred, and review current programs designed to produce further reductions in impaired driving. In the decade of the 1980s, there were impressive declines in drinking and driving in much of the industrialized world. The declines included about 50% in the Great Britain, 28% in Canada and The Netherlands, 32% in Australia, 37% in Germany and 26% in the U.S. These declines did not continue in the early part of the 1990s. In some countries, there were actually increases. Toward the middle and latter part of the decade the increases stabilized and we again began to see some decreases. However, these decreases have been at a slower rate than the dramatic decreases in the 1980s. Toward the end of the 1990s and in the new century, the record has been mixed. Clear trends have emerged. Some countries (France and Germany) continued to reduce drinking and driving while in other countries (Australia, Canada, United Kingdom and the United States), there was stagnation and in some cases small increases or even large increase as was the case in Sweden. Trends on drug impaired driving are also beginning to emerge in some countries. These trends will also be discussed.

Keywords: Drinking driving trends, Drugged driving trends, Worldwide impaired driving trends