

strategies to encourage governments to set up suicide prevention programmes to reduce suicide rates in populations as a whole rather than method- and site-specific rates.

Suicide in low- and middle-income countries is not only a medical and public health problem but is also related to economics and culture. A coordinated and a comprehensive response is needed to make any impact.

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One hundred years ago

The increase of temperance

The Inland Revenue returns show a steadily progressive decrease in the consumption of beer and spirits in the United Kingdom since 1899; that is in encouraging contrast with the equally steady but more rapid increase up to that date.

The beer consumption in 1899–1900 was 32.2 gallons per head of the population, making a total of 36.5 million barrels, but in 1905–1906 this had fallen to 27.9 gallons per head and to 33.5 million barrels.

The spirit consumption has also fallen each year from 1.17 gallons per head and a total of 48 million gallons for 1889–

1900 to .90 gallons per head and 39.1 million gallons in 1905–1906.

The reduction in the consumption of spirits is very striking, and in addition to the reduction in the total quantity of beer consumed there is to be added the large increase in the proportion of the lighter beers of home and foreign manufacture.

Pauperism, crime, and insanity are so largely attributable to the abuse of alcoholic drinks that the statistics of each should be carefully watched during the next few years for any indication of an improvement. It is, of course, possible that this reduction may be due only to the greater moderation from necessity or improved habits of the middle and upper classes only,

although it would appear to be too large to be thus explained.

Abuse of alcohol, in the statistics of the causes of insanity, has fluctuated very little for many years past, so that any distinct diminution would be very significant, and should encourage a still more vigorous crusade in favour of true temperance – the use without abuse of the cup that cheers and may inebriate.

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