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Nightlife, going out, partying, good times and celebrations are a few of the terms used to describe one of today's most popular leisure activities for teenagers and young adults. Nightlife and revellers venues are often as glittery as a disco ball and as varied as the lightshows and music they provide.

Going out and having fun is the main idea, but it is often linked with problematic behaviour patterns. The consumption of substances, violent behaviour, risky sexual behaviour and associated negative social consequences are issues that are constantly addressed by specialists, politicians and the media in particular. Who hasn't seen the headlines concerning the consumption of alcohol in public spaces, and the disturbances caused by noise from partygoers or clubs that prevent neighbours from sleeping? The question is what problems result for society and the public health system, and which preventative and damage-limitation measures need to be adopted. In the political arena there are calls for more restrictive measures. The most recent example is the discussion in Switzerland concerning banning the consumption of alcohol in public places after 9pm. Currently the authorities are inclined to attempt to fight this behaviour pattern through structural, usually repressive measures. But what are the consequences of these restrictions?

One of the consequences is that the issue increasingly shifts towards the private areas and/or the illegal underground. This means that parties move to far more dangerous settings where there are no checks or controls and where individuals with problematic behaviour patterns are particularly difficult to reach. This also means that preventative and damage-limiting interventions are usually much more difficult to realise, although they are generally far more promising than purely restrictive measures.

Therefore what is required is an intensification of preventative and damage-limiting activities in combination with the necessary restrictive measures.

This special issue, which is available in German and English, on the Club Health Conference¹ which took place in June 2010, contains possible answers on prevention and damage reduction in nightlife. The interdisciplinary conference was attended by over 250 specialists from all over the world. In eighty informative lectures the range of nightlife was illustrated and facts and experiences from research and practice was provided. This publication also contains research results into gender aspects, risk behaviour under the influence of drugs, and practical examples from peer work and in co-operation with small dealers. Zurich's many years' experience in party drug prevention was presented.

We hope you will find this «addiction publication» of interest, and I would like to take this opportunity, on behalf of the organisational committee, to thank all the sponsors and helpers of the Club Health Conference 2010.

For further information on the conference and to see the plenary presentations please go to www.clubhealthconference.com.

Alexander Bücheli, Peter Menzi

1 With regard to the translations, in the event of doubt the wording of the original language will apply.