Public Access to Health Information
Alcohol and other drugs as health problems
Because alcohol and other drug problems all have major psychological elements, they are mainly countered through information.

Although there are some drug therapies, treatments for addiction are mainly at detoxification centres and clinics.

These treatments seem to have little effect if sufferers are not psychologically prepared to deal with the problem themselves.

Help groups like Alcoholics Anonymous all attack the problem at the psychological level.

Therefore there is a need for good information for addicts and their families.
The problem of addiction

• For individuals
  – Damage to personal and family relationships
  – Reduced capacity to work and earn money
  – Likelihood of involvement in crime to pay for a habit
  – Vulnerability to disease
  – Progressive damage to bodily organs
  – Premature death

• For families and communities
  – Breakdown of family and community life.
Sources of addiction

• Initial reasons for drink and drug abuse
  – Curiosity
  – Social pressures
  – Improving self-image
  – Avoiding making decisions
  – Escaping from frustration and pain

• Why this can become addiction
  – Strong connections with addiction in previous generations
  – Family violence and sexual abuse
Other routes to addiction

• Abuse of prescription drugs (such as painkillers, anti-depressants and sleeping tablets)
• Use of anabolic steroids by sports persons.
• These can be addictive in their own right, and can lead to involvement with other substance abuse.
How to avoid addiction and abuse

- Good diet and exercise
- Avoiding tobacco and alcohol (even though they are legal)
- Correct use of prescription drugs
The role of information

• With awareness of
  – The causes of alcohol and other substance abuse
  – How addiction develops
  – The consequences of abuse and addiction

• Families and communities can fight to prevent addiction and organise treatment.
What the library can do

- Collecting pamphlets and other publications on addiction and abuse of alcohol and other substances
- Displaying posters and other publicity material
- Organising events such as inviting guest speakers or showing relevant films and videos.
- Liaison with clinics, support groups and campaigning NGOs to disseminate information
- Use of library premises for family and support groups.