

9<sup>th</sup> September 2011

## **IAEM encourages Junior Certificate students to 'Stay Safe' when celebrating their results**

The Irish Association for Emergency Medicine congratulates all Junior Certificate students on their examination results which will be released on Wednesday next (14<sup>th</sup> September). The Association would encourage students to celebrate their achievements safely. Each autumn, Emergency Departments (EDs) in Ireland see an increase in alcohol and drug related injury and illness in young people and students, associated with the release of the Junior and Leaving Certificate results, the Debs celebrations and starting College.

IAEM would encourage students to enjoy these important events. It would advise students that not all celebrations need alcohol or drugs. Alcohol, if used, should be used in moderation with 6 units being the maximum recommended amount in any day. This corresponds to approximately 3 pints, two-thirds of a bottle of wine or six single measures (total 150ml) of spirits.

This is an important time for people to learn "safe-drinking" habits. Current binge drinking habits in Ireland may lead to a destructive long-term relationship with alcohol. Irish EDs frequently see young people put in very risky positions as a result of alcohol ingestion, some with significant injuries or others deeply unconscious. Alcohol abuse is also associated with risky sexual practices and increased mental health problems. The risk of assault also increases; 80% of patients with assault related head injuries in Ireland had used alcohol at the time of the injury<sup>1</sup>

Recreational drugs have significant risks despite the popular perception that they are safe. Many of the former "head-shop" drugs are still available and are associated with severe mental health disturbances that can be prolonged and extremely distressing.

This is a very exciting time for students and their families. IAEM would like to promote positive physical and mental well-being and would encourage students to be proactive about their health at this important time.

<sup>1</sup> Phillips' report on Traumatic Brain Injury in Ireland, 2008

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