

# *Swedish alcohol policy*

*the social handling of boozers and wine sippers*

Börje Olsson

SoRAD

Stockholm University



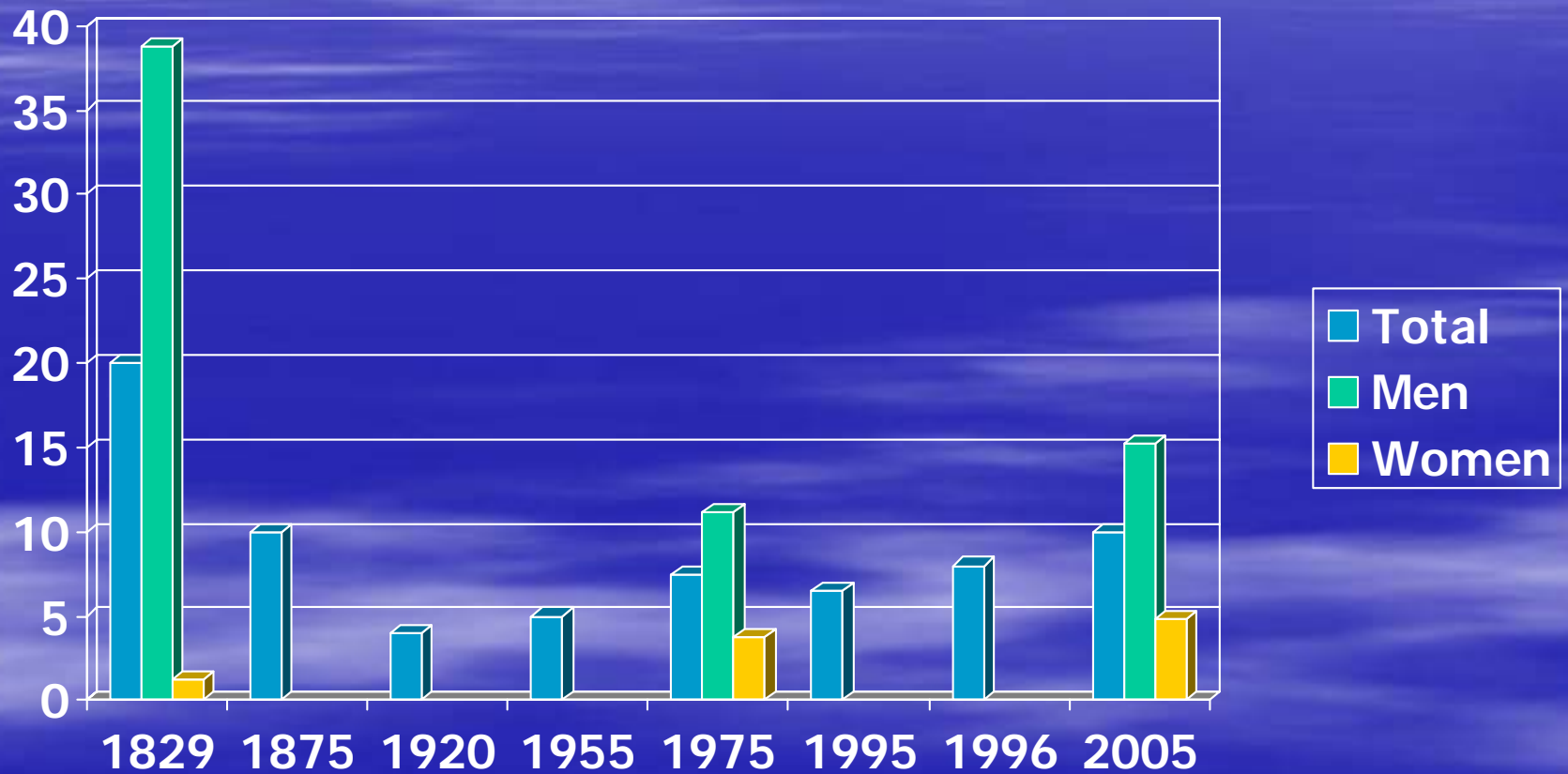
# *”Alcohol policy periods”*

- Thirst, salt and clean beverages (and some rituals and Vikings)
- War and failure of the crops
- Temperance movements and the prohibition that did not come about
- The Bratt-system – an alternative to prohibition
- An attempt to civilize the Swedish boozier
- The era of the total consumption model
- What now?

# *Emerging alcohol problems*

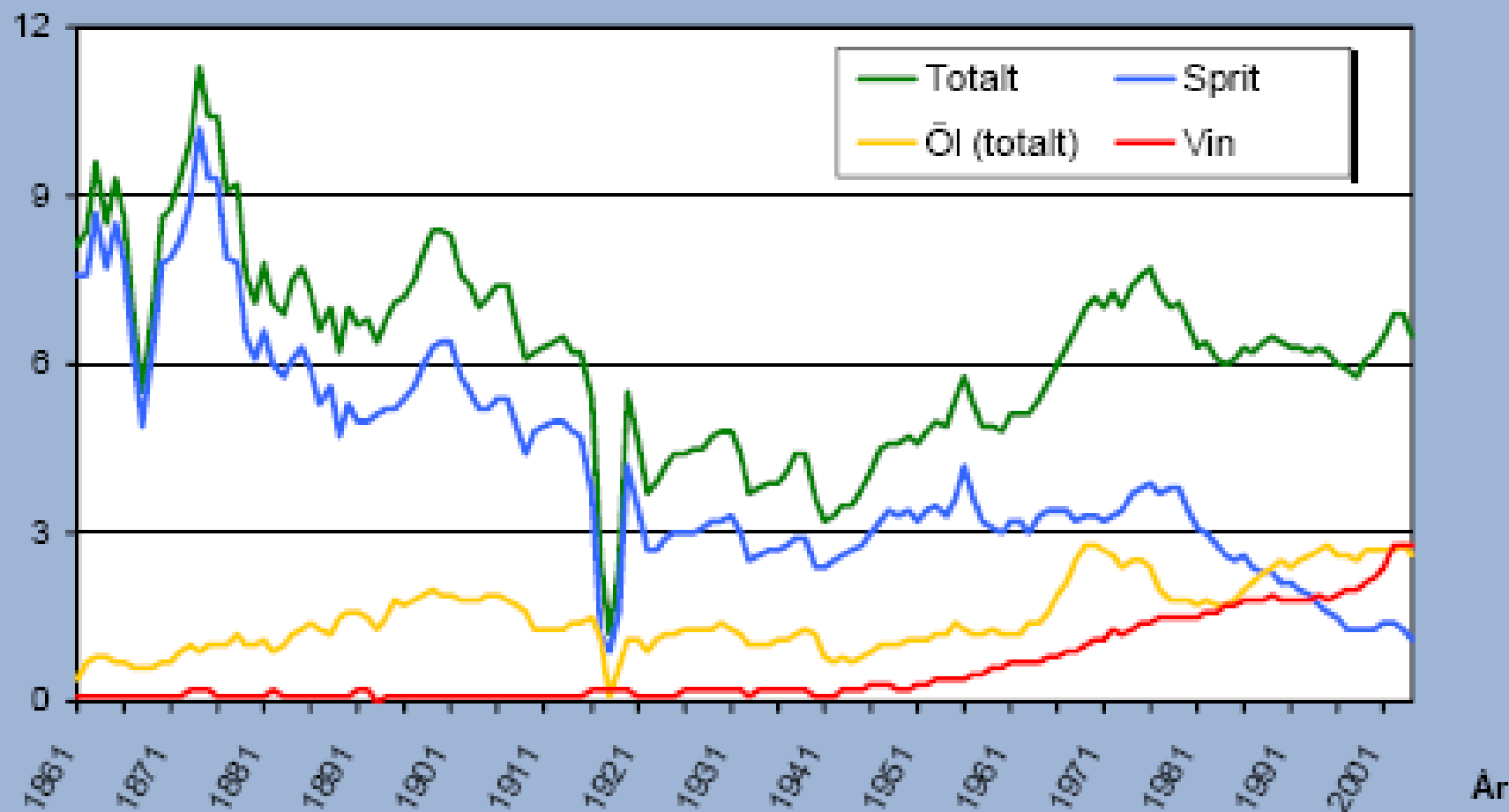
- *Omission to support the family*
- *Booze instead of salary or salary to buy booze*
- *Intoxication*
- *Statistics*

# *Alcohol consumption in Sweden – litres 100 % alcohol*



Försäljningen av sprit, vin och öl i liter alkohol 100% per invånare 15 år och däröver. 1861-2004.

Liter



# *Reactions*

- *Temperance movement (as well as free church and labour movements)*
- *Local sales monopolies (Falun 1850; Göteborg 1865; Stockholm 1914)*
- *Claims for total prohibition*

# *Referendum in 1922*

- In favour of prohibition 49 %
- Against prohibition 51 %
- ...what next?

## *...next? The Bratt System*

- *No commercial interests in the alcohol business*
- *Monopolies*
- *Rationing book (4 litres, later 3, of spirits/month)*
- *Local temperance boards*
- *Treatment, incl. compulsory*

# *1955 – the end of the rationing system*

## *Reasons*

- *Ideological – the temperance movements role*
- *Failure to reach the addicts*
- *General liberalizations*

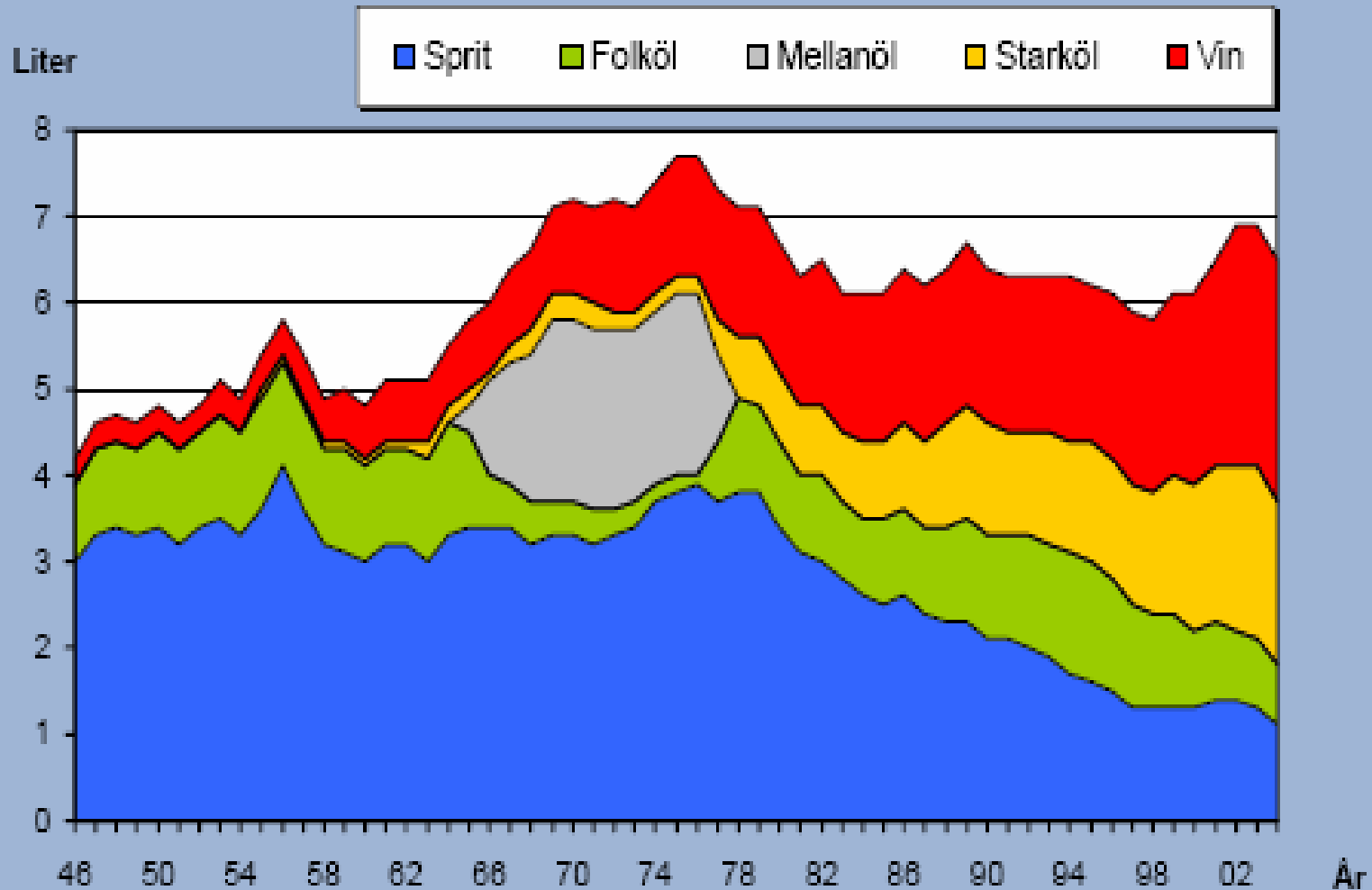
# *1955-1976 - on the search for the moderate drinker*

- *At first – increased consumption and alcohol related harms curtailed by substantial increases of prices*
- *The aim – beer and wine in moderation instead of spirits for intoxication*
- *Information and education*
- *Medium strong beer into grocery shops*
- *...the result of this policy change?*

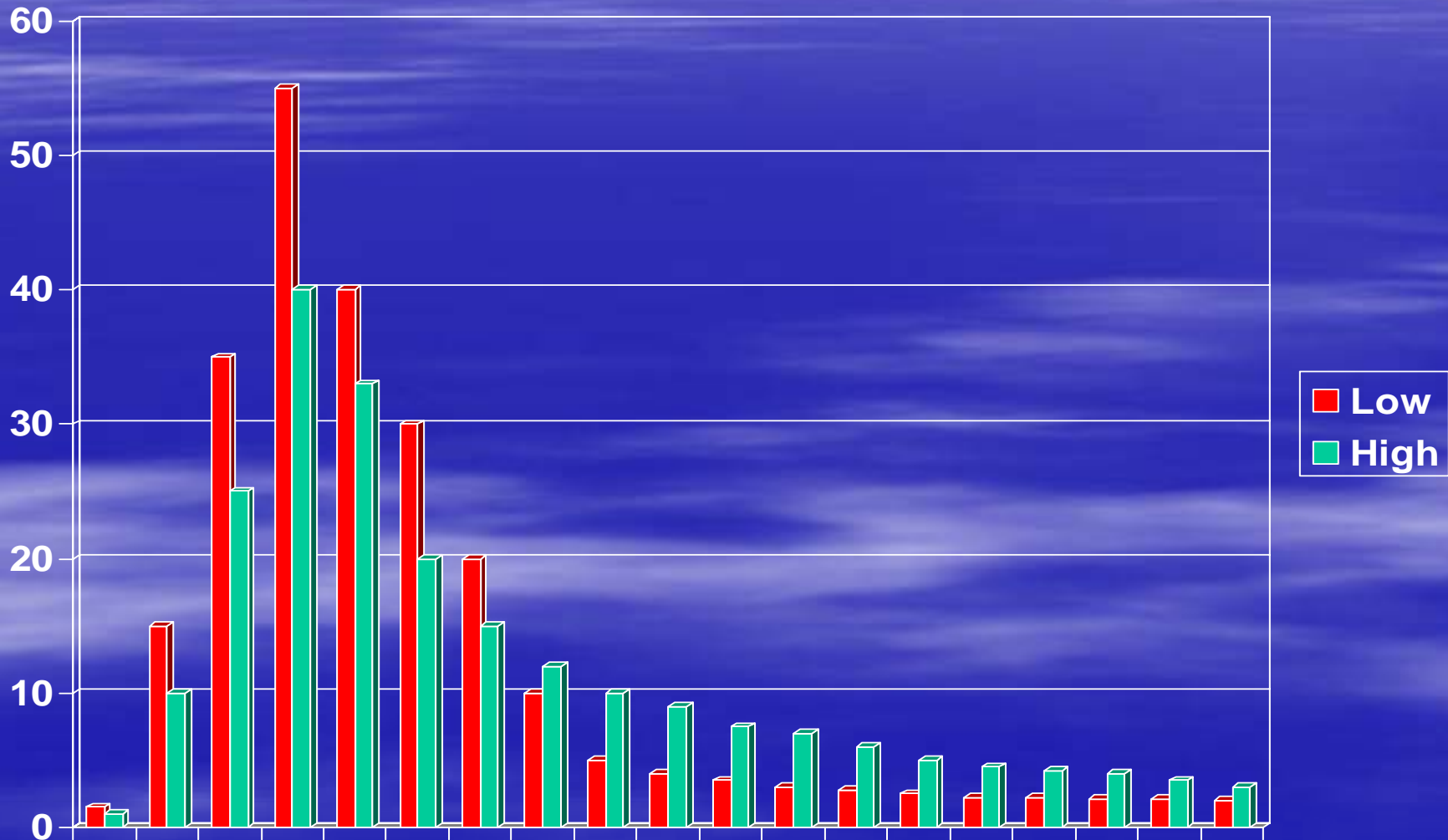
## *...increased consumption*

- *In general, but most among high consumers and youth*
- *Increased harms as morbidity and mortality*
- *...the reaction?*

Försäljningen av sprit, vin och öl i liter alkohol 100%  
per invånare 15 år och däröver. 1946-2004.



# *... a policy built on the total consumption model*



# *1976-1995 - policy aims and methods*

- *To reduce the total alcohol consumption*
- *Universal restrictions, such as:*
  - *high prices/taxes*
  - *restricted availability through the retail monopoly*
  - *age limits*
  
- *...but also...*

- *an extensive treatment system*
- *information and education*
- *secondary prevention directed towards work places, the traffic, youth and pregnant women*
- *and more...*

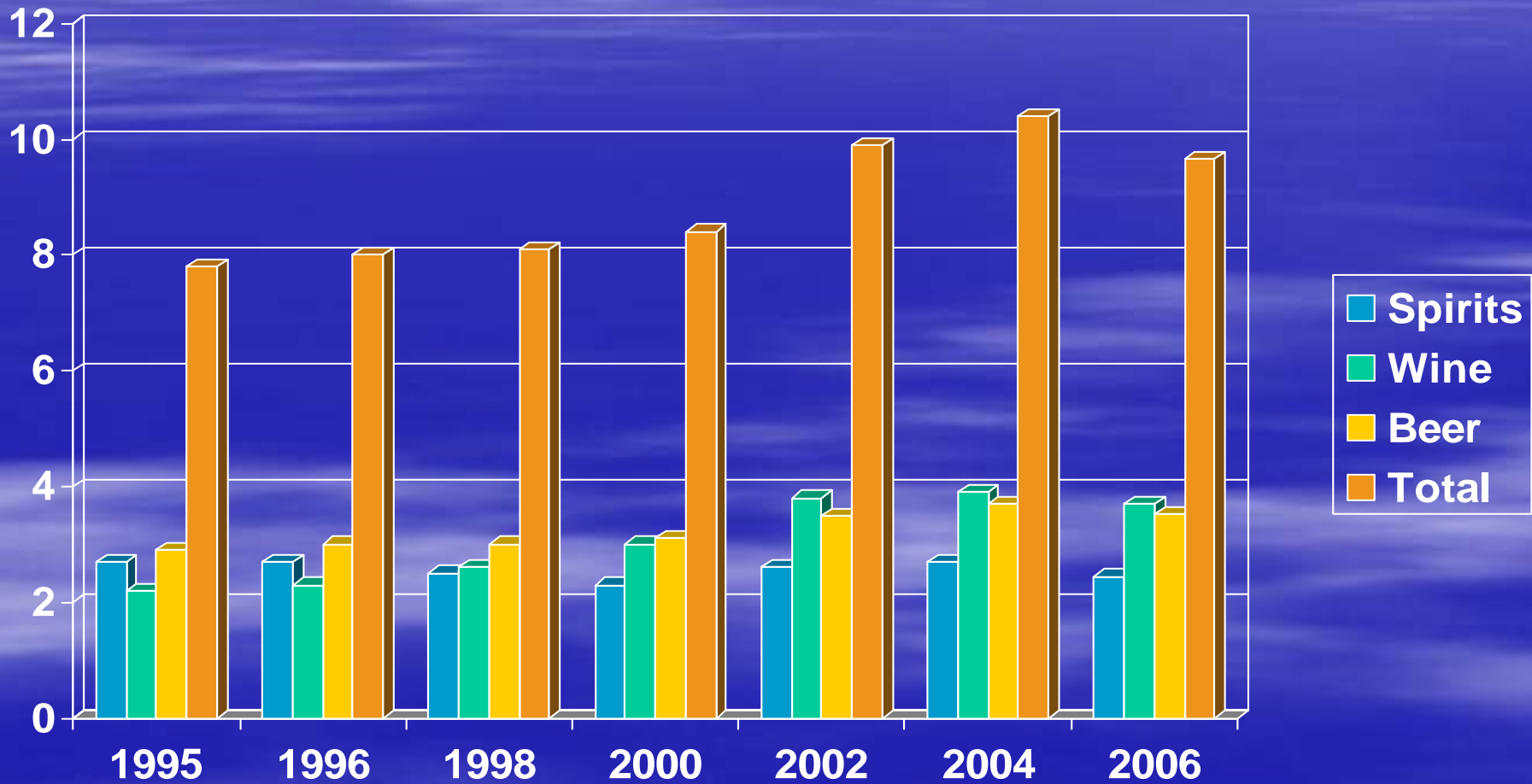
# *1995 → changes and trends*

- *Membership in the EU*
- *General liberalizations*
- *Weaker welfare state*
- *Individualization*
- *Double legitimacy crisis*

# *1995 → alcohol policy changes*

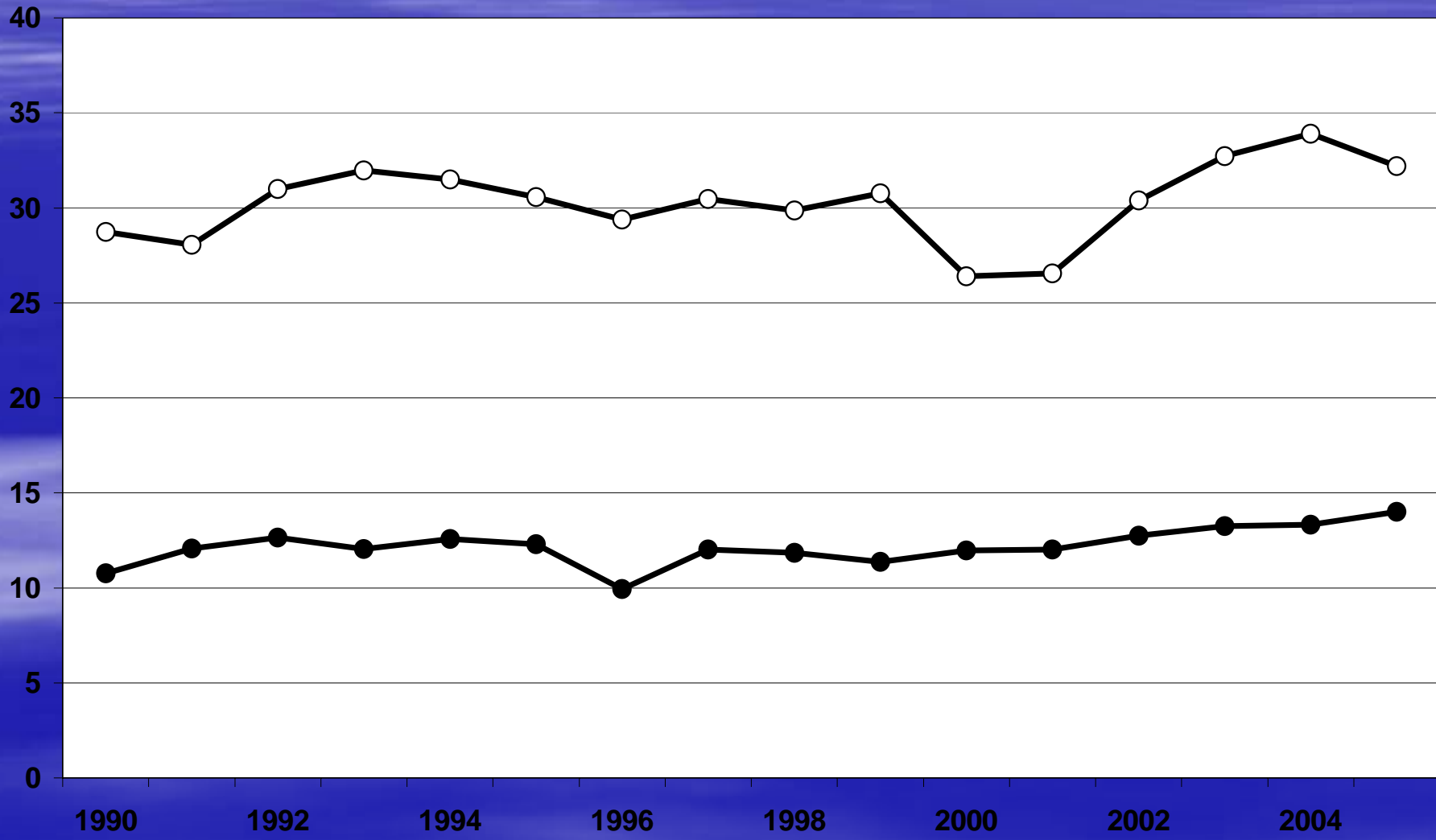
- *Abolishing 4 out of 5 alcohol monopolies*
- *Increased quotas for private import*
- *Lower alcohol taxes*
- *Focus on specific groups and areas*
- *Treatment and medicalization*

# *Total alcohol consumption 1995-2006*



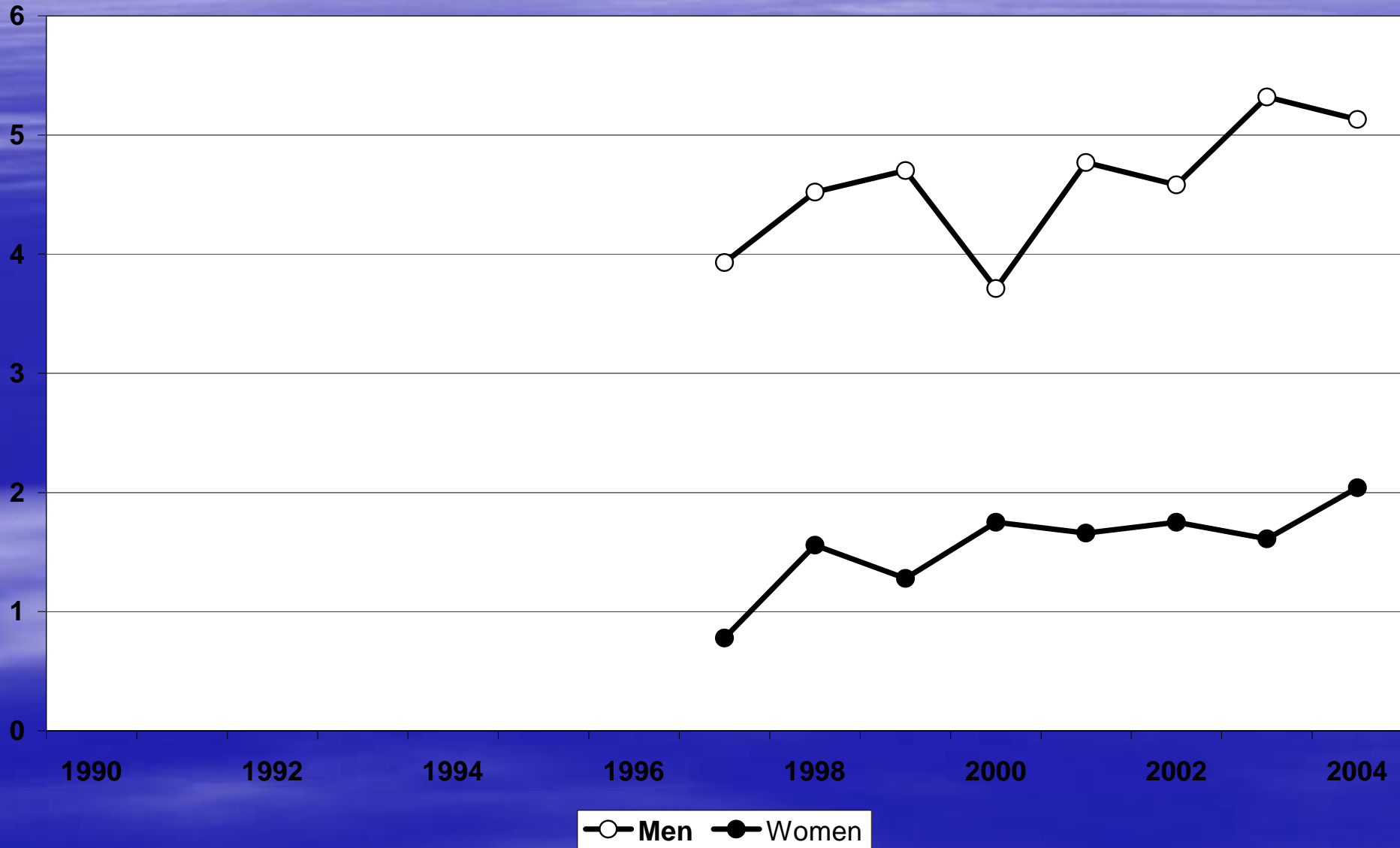
# *Alcohol-specific cirrhosis morbidity*

## *1990-2004*

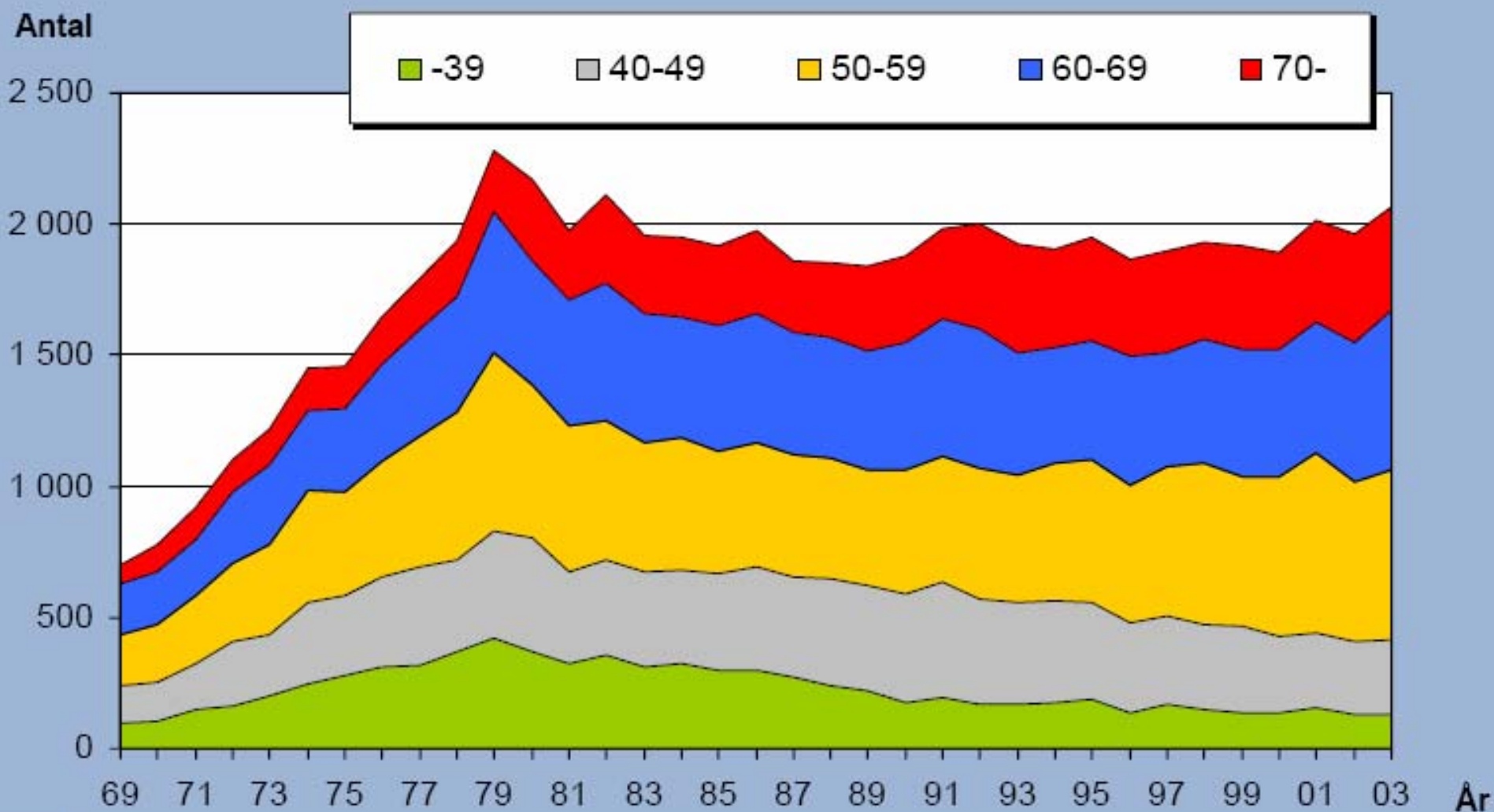


# *Alcohol-specific cirrhosis mortality*

## *1997-2004*



Antal dödsfall med alkoholdiagnos som underliggande eller bidragande dödsorsak fördelat på åldersgrupper. 1969-2003.



# *SUMMARY OF RECENT CHANGES*

*97/98-03/04/05*

	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>
<u><i>Alcohol consumption</i></u>	<i>+ 2 litres per capita</i>	
<i>Expected increase:</i>	<i>+80%</i>	<i>+65%</i>
<i>Cirrhosis mortality</i>	<i>+11%</i>	<i>+26%</i>
<u><i>Alcoholic cirrhosis mortality</i></u>	<i>+24%</i>	<i>+ 55%</i>
<u><i>Cirrhosis morbidity</i></u>	<i>+10%</i>	<i>+25%</i>

# *Conclusions - Sweden*

- *Declining mortality during the 1990s despite stable population drinking*
- *Some increase in mortality and morbidity since 2000*
- *.. but not as much as "expected" in particular not for men*

## *Why?*

- *Heavy and moderate drinkers affected differently?*
- *Treatment improved?*
- *Liver transplants?*
- *Other?*

# *What now?*

- *Are Swedes becoming Europeans, or is*
- *The EU influenced by Sweden*

