Rationale for harmful alcohol consumption as a risk factor for chronic diseases

Introduction
The questions in this module measure:

- Frequency of alcohol consumption
- Quantity of alcohol consumption

Research findings
Some research findings related to alcohol consumption are as follows:

- In 2000, alcohol use caused 3.2% of deaths (1.8 million) worldwide, and 4% of the global disease burden.\(^1\)
- Alcohol consumption is the leading risk factor for disease burden in low mortality developing countries and the third largest risk factor in developed countries.\(^2\)
- The proportion of disease burden attributable to alcohol use in the developing world is between 2.6% to 9.8% of the total burden for males and 0.5% to 2.0% of the total burden for females.\(^3\)
- Besides the direct toxic effects of intoxication and addiction, alcohol use causes about 20% to 30% of each of esophageal cancer, liver disease, homicide, epileptic seizures, and motor vehicle accidents worldwide.\(^2\)
- Heavy alcohol use increases the risk of cardiovascular disease\(^4,5,6,7,8,9\) and stroke\(^10,11,12,13,14\).
- Alcohol consumption during pregnancy is related to various risks to the fetus, which include Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders. Alcohol consumption during pregnancy can also lead to spontaneous abortion, low birth weight and prematurity, and intra-uterine growth retardation.\(^15,16,17,18,19,20,21,22,23,24,25,26,27,28,29,30\)
- Higher volume of alcohol consumption is also associated with depression.\(^2\)
- Excessive alcohol consumption can severely impair an individual's functioning in social roles such as parent, spouse or partner.\(^2\)

Reference
5. Klatsky A L. Cardiovascular effects of alcohol. Scientific American


