Conversely, it also conveyed the fact that, even in a situation where there is only one sexual partner, one can still be infected. This came over clearly in the debriefing when one pupil, who had only exchanged sex twice (both times with the same partner) picked up the 'virus' on the second occasion.

Another possible outcome illustrates the consequences of the virus being held and circulating within a small community. We have heard of one run when the increase across the population was very limited: upon examination it had been shown that the tagged individuals had exchanged largely within their own group, thus not spreading the infection to the wider population.

**Evaluation**

Our 4th-year tutor was very impressed by the degree of involvement and participation. Subsequent feedback from the pupils, which included discussion and written comments, reflected their enjoyment: "I thought it was a good idea to make it into a game rather than just go on and on about it," and also their opinion that "it was much better to take part in the game without knowing what was happening because there was more of an impact at the end."

What came across strongly, however, was the central learning experience was the realisation of the potential rate of the spread of HIV. As translation of this into AIDS terms as the pupils circled numerous numbers began to outnumber those without AIDS was a very valuable learning experience.

We feel that the simulation provided a very effective means of conveying important information on the transmission of the HIV virus. As part of our evaluation, we plan to use the Exchange Game to launch our programme next year.

**Support**

I would also recommend that schools who are building up their AIDS education programme should look at the support materials in the copyright-free resource pack. There is, for example, a full class role play which provides an active means of exploring attitudes towards AIDS and people with the HIV virus. Other exercises allow pupils to produce anti-AIDS posters to raise the awareness and understanding of AIDS by peers and the public. If you wish to use this material, you may write to the author.

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**PARENTS AND HEALTH EDUCATION**

When we carried out the research leading to the major report on Health education priorities for the primary school curriculum, we invited parents to take part in the study independently of any aspect of health education that concerned them. A total of 3,500 did so, and we have collected a representative sample of school health under various headings: such as:

- Approval of health education
- Disapproval of health education
- The '3 Rs' most important
- Certain topics do more harm than good
- 'Hidden curriculum' the best place
- Concern for how the topic is taught
- Shock-horror method needed
- Special teacher preparation necessary

...and many more. Open it anywhere and you will find it hard to put down!

Price £7.50, including postage, from the Unit.

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**HEALTH BEHAVIOUR**

The Unit's Health Belated Behaviour Questionnaire has been completed by more than 190,000 pupils in 945 schools. These schools are listed by Education Authority. An asterisk indicates a non-Authority school.

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**P. A. MASKELL**

An 'alcohol policy' for a secondary school

Parents or guardians will be informed and consulted on all occasions where there is cause for concern about a pupil's consumption of alcohol. Realistic appraisal of pupils' progress, further consultation, and further action by the school may be necessary.

Positive messages about responsible attitudes to alcohol should be reinforced not only by all staff but in all aspects of school life. Education takes place and is reinforced in many different ways. Factual information about the social and physical effects of alcohol is more effective if it is backed up by active pupil participation in meaningful discussion and role play. Activities which develop confidence and self-esteem make individual choice easier.

**Alcohol-free**

Alcohol-free societies are not sold during school time. Soft drinks are always provided as an alternative at all activities. At Sixth Form social events the ticket includes refreshments, food, and a maximum of two glasses of wine or non-alcoholic beverages. Alcohol-free drinks may not be purchased by pupils, and they may not win al-
Discussions on alcohol and safety and drinking and driving give opportunities to present the alcohol-free way of life.

It should be pointed out that there are other methods of relaxation. In school, relaxation by means of sport, aerobics, music and relaxation classes is available to pupils and staff.

All staff and pupils should be aware of the school's alcohol policy.

Areas where Alcohol Education currently takes place in school are as follows:

- 2nd Year: Tutorial work.
- 3rd Year: Science, RE (briefly).
- 4th Year: RSE (term of Drugs & Medicines course), Science.
- 5th Year: Science.
- 6th Form: Tutorial work, Drinking and driving, Health Studies course.

**Drinking: the nationwide picture**

To discover the levels of alcohol consumption by our pupils, we ran John Balding's Health Related Behaviour Questionnaire. However, it was also necessary to set these results in a national context, and to do this I also obtained the Unit's nationwide results for surveys run in 1984, 1985 and 1986.

Values of units of alcohol consumed during the 7 days prior to the questionnaire were very consistent across the years (17 to 15+) in all these surveys. Girls consume less alcohol than do boys. The use of shandy as a drink decreases, consumption of other alcoholic drinks increases, beer, wine, and spirits increasing most.

The units of alcohol (one glass of wine equivalent) consumed increase from 3 (boys) and 2 (girls) per week in the 1st year to 10 (boys) and 6 (girls) in the 5th year. Cider drinking decreases with age but consumption tends to be regional. The use of wine by girls seems to be increasing in all age groups and during the three years of the survey (sample size greater than 46,000).

**Histograms from the school's alcohol policy leaflet, showing results from two questions in their Health Related Behaviour survey**

Home was the major source of alcohol especially for 15-14 year olds, the pub acts as more of a source for 15+ year olds. The use of supermarkets and off-licenses as sources is noticeable at all ages with boys more than girls. One-fifth of 5th-year boys used an off-licence as a source during the week.

The presence of alcohol at discos and parties is commonplace. Alcohol is usually consumed in social situations, and there is a greater tendency for those who drink to smoke as well. There is a positive correlation between the number of units of alcohol consumed in the last week and money spent on alcohol. The money often comes from part-time jobs. There is a link between alcohol and diet: girls eating less food, or none, for breakfast; boys paying little attention to weight control.

**Social pressure**

School courses and home training policies tend to assume, realistically perhaps, that the young person will come under pressure to drink alcohol at some time during their life.

Information on the long and short-term effects of alcohol is included in Science and Social Education courses. An integral part of pastoral work and PSE courses involves self-esteem activities necessary to give the confidence to make personal choices. Making an informed choice on the use of alcohol is probably one of the most difficult due to the variety of pressures involved.

**Our own pupils' survey**

Compared with the national results, 4th-year girls at this school are more likely to consume alcohol one day in the previous week than are boys (45% of girls compared with 25.5% of boys). 5th-year girls are also more likely to consume alcohol than boys on two days in the preceding week, but overall the percentage of days on which alcohol is consumed is higher in boys than in girls.

Overall the percentages consuming any alcoholic drink were in tune with the results of the questionnaires nationally.

The units of alcohol drunk in the week preceding the questionnaire were greater in the 5th year than the 4th year, with 40% of 4th-year females and 28% of 4th-year males not consuming any alcohol but 32% of 5th-year females and only 15% of 5th-year males who did not drink alcohol. The consumption of most pupils was low, most drinking between 1 and 4 units of alcohol in the week preceding the questionnaire.

Very few were drinking 11-21 units per week, the maximum being 4 in the 4th year and 5 in the 5th year (males and 2% in the 4th year and 3.6% in the 5th year (females)).

These percentages of units of alcohol drunk (i.e., 1 glass of wine or half a pint of beer) are less than those shown in the national results. There is still the increasing trend of greater consumption and binge-drinking in boys. This trend goes on into the 6th Form. We believe it does.

P. A. Maskell is Head of Health Studies at this secondary school. He may be contacted c/o the Unit. — Ed.