

# The French experience: a health warning to raise awareness

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# Alcohol and pregnancy: a brief reminder

- Prenatal exposure to alcohol can affect the baby's health (esp. brain)
- No known level for safety
  - ➔ Safest option: "no alcohol during pregnancy"

# History of the French health warning

- Summer 2004: lawsuit for lack of information
- August 2004 (law on Public Health): 1st attempt to move forward
- A step forward: the law of 11th February 2005 on disabilities

*« toutes les unités de conditionnement des boissons alcoolisées portent, dans des conditions fixées par arrêté du ministre chargé de la santé, un message à caractère sanitaire préconisant l'absence de consommation par les femmes enceintes »*

# A lengthy process

- At the French level:
  - Negotiations with stakeholders: alcohol producers
  - Negotiations with other Ministries
  - Presentation to disabled people's advocacy groups
- At the European level:
  - Notification of the European Commission under directive 98/34/CE

# Outcome

- Publication of the legal base for the inclusion of a health warning on alcohol labelling
  - “Arrêté”, 3 October 2006: logo or sentence
  - Imposes a written message or a graphic one
- Press campaign + media coverage
  - October 2006
  - October 2007 (implementation)

# The French health warning



OR

*“La consommation de boissons alcoolisées pendant la grossesse, même en faible quantité, peut avoir des conséquences graves sur la santé de l'enfant.”*

I.e.: consumption of alcoholic drinks during pregnancy, even in small amounts, may have serious consequences on the child's health.

# Labelling is part of a wider strategy

- Information for students in schools
- National media campaign of prevention: communication in feminine as well as general public media
- Information for pregnant women in their « pregnancy book »
- Epidemiological monitoring (InVS)
- Better training for professionals

# Our study

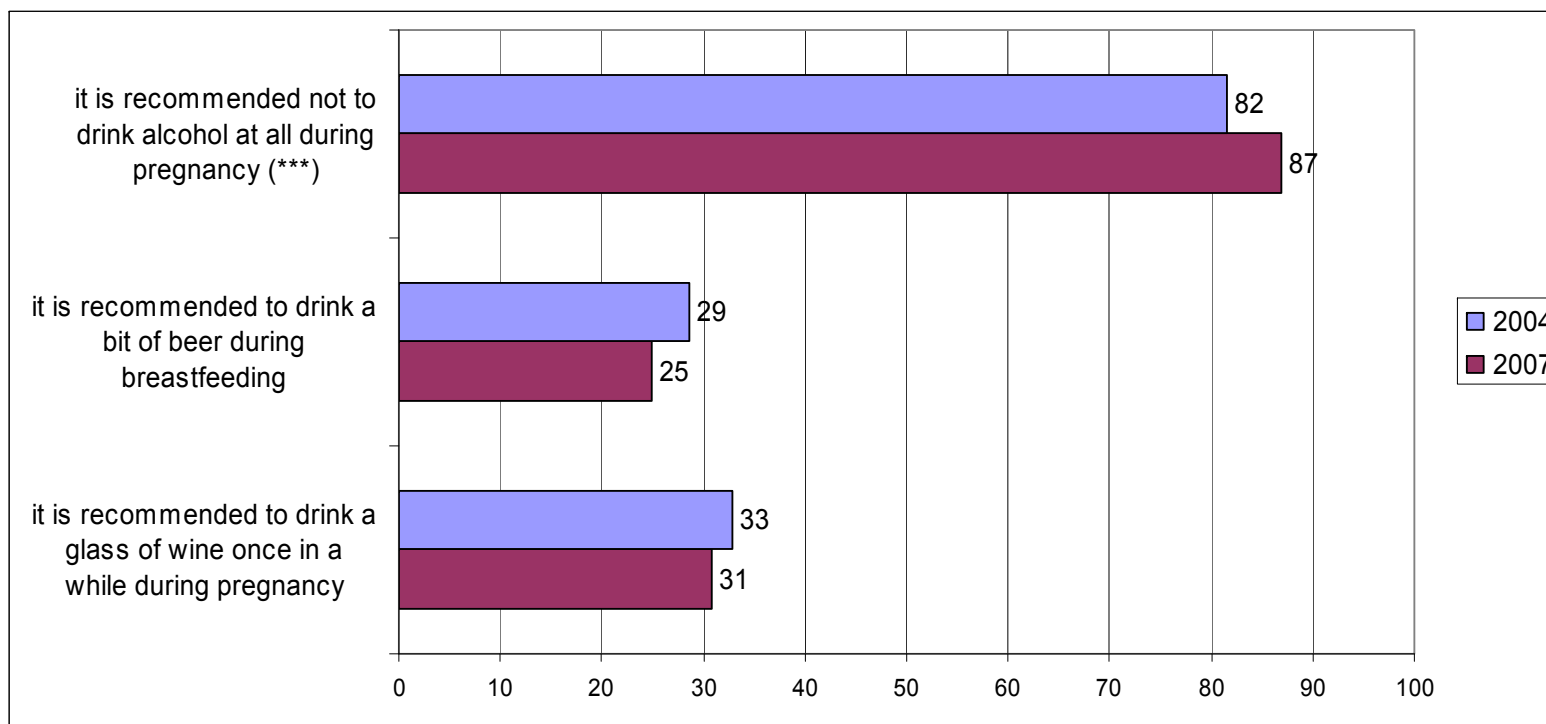
- 2004 (before measure was announced):
  - Assess knowledge about alcohol and pregnancy
  - Test various health warnings
  - ➔ Results published in 2006 (same time as “arrêté”)
- 2007 (after implementation started):
  - New assessment of knowledge
  - ➔ Objective: evolutions since 2004

# Method and population

- Two phone surveys:
  - before: November 2004
  - after: December 2007
- Two independent samples:
  - representative of the French population aged 15 +
  - quota samples (gender, age and householder's occupation, after stratification by region and city size)
  - 2004: 1,003 people / 2007: 1,006 people
- For some questions: desired response not provided

# Results: Recommendations

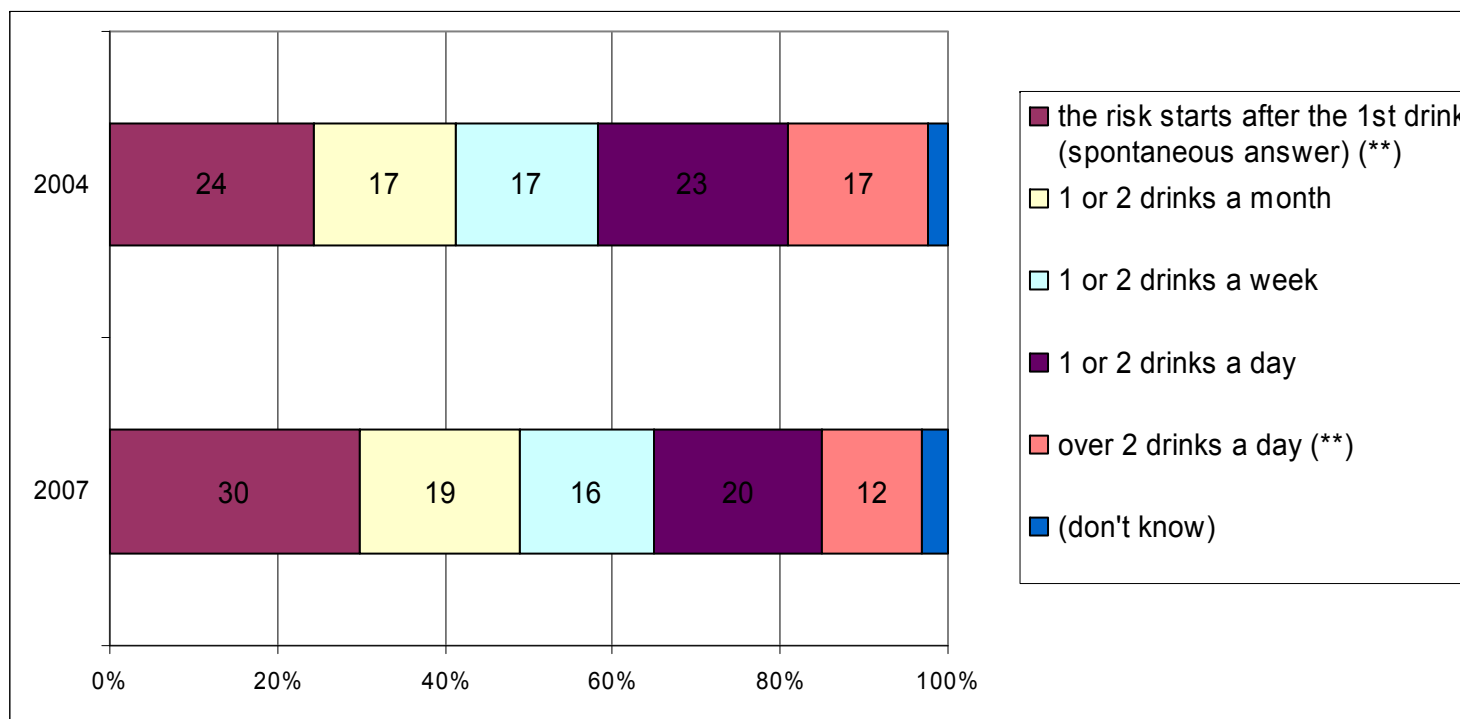
% people thinking these ideas are right in 2004 and 2007



# Results:

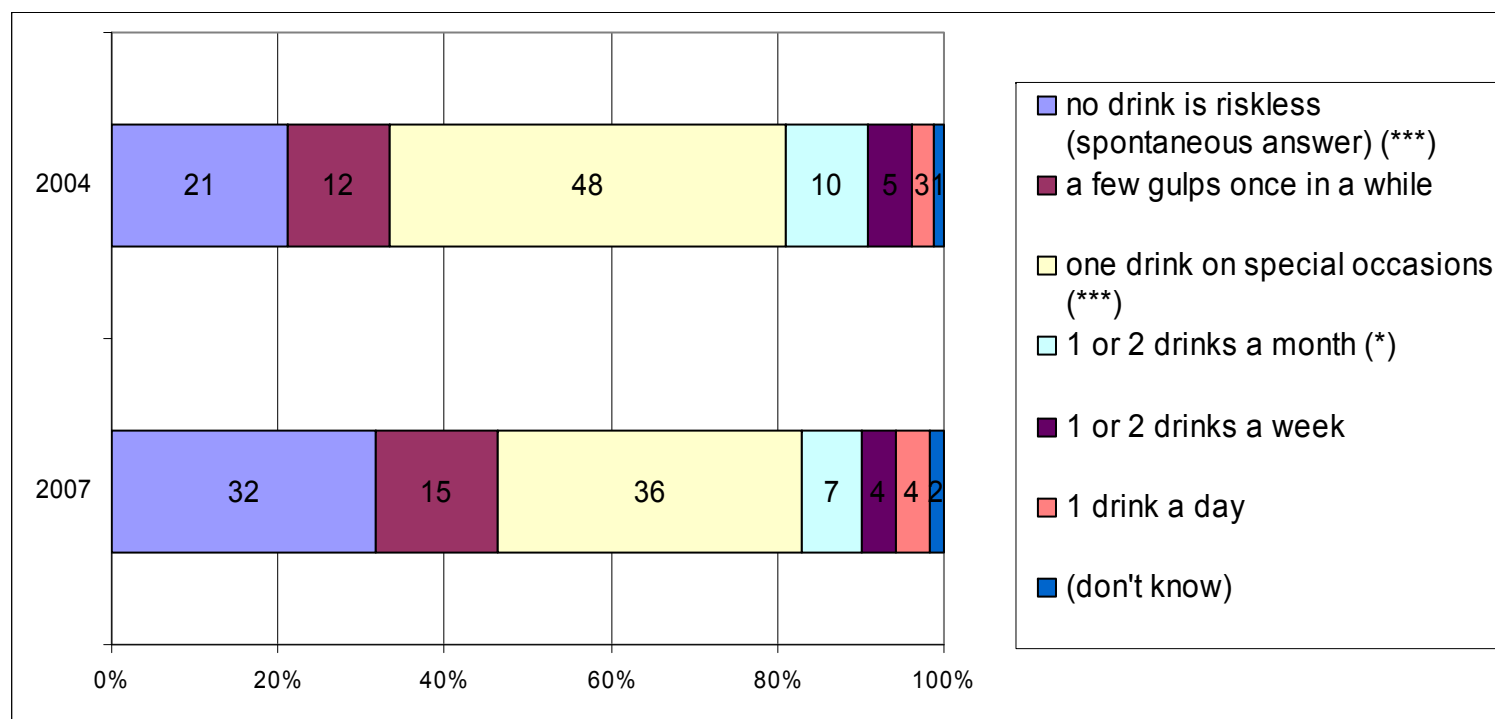
## Risk level (1/2)

At what quantity does alcohol consumption during pregnancy become dangerous for the baby's health?  
(%, 2004 and 2007)



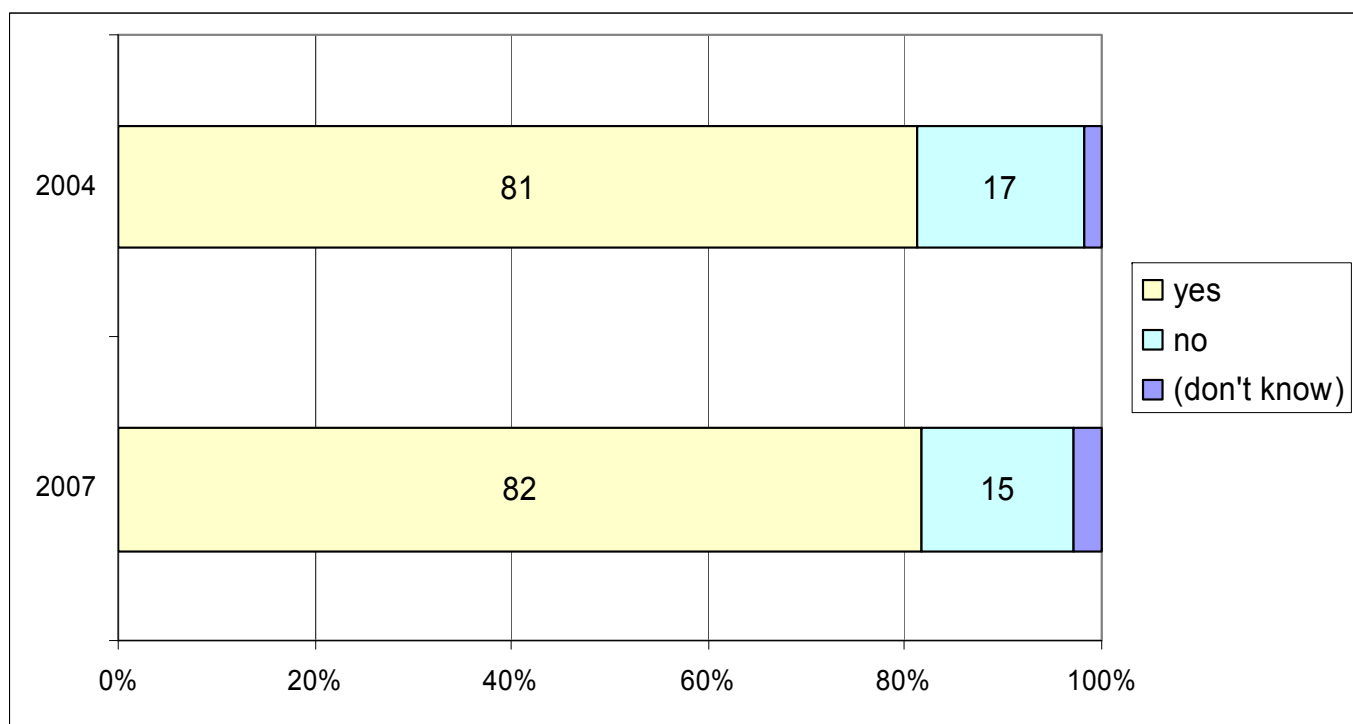
# Results: Risk level (2/2)

How much alcohol can a pregnant woman drink without taking a risk with her baby's health? (% , 2004 and 2007)



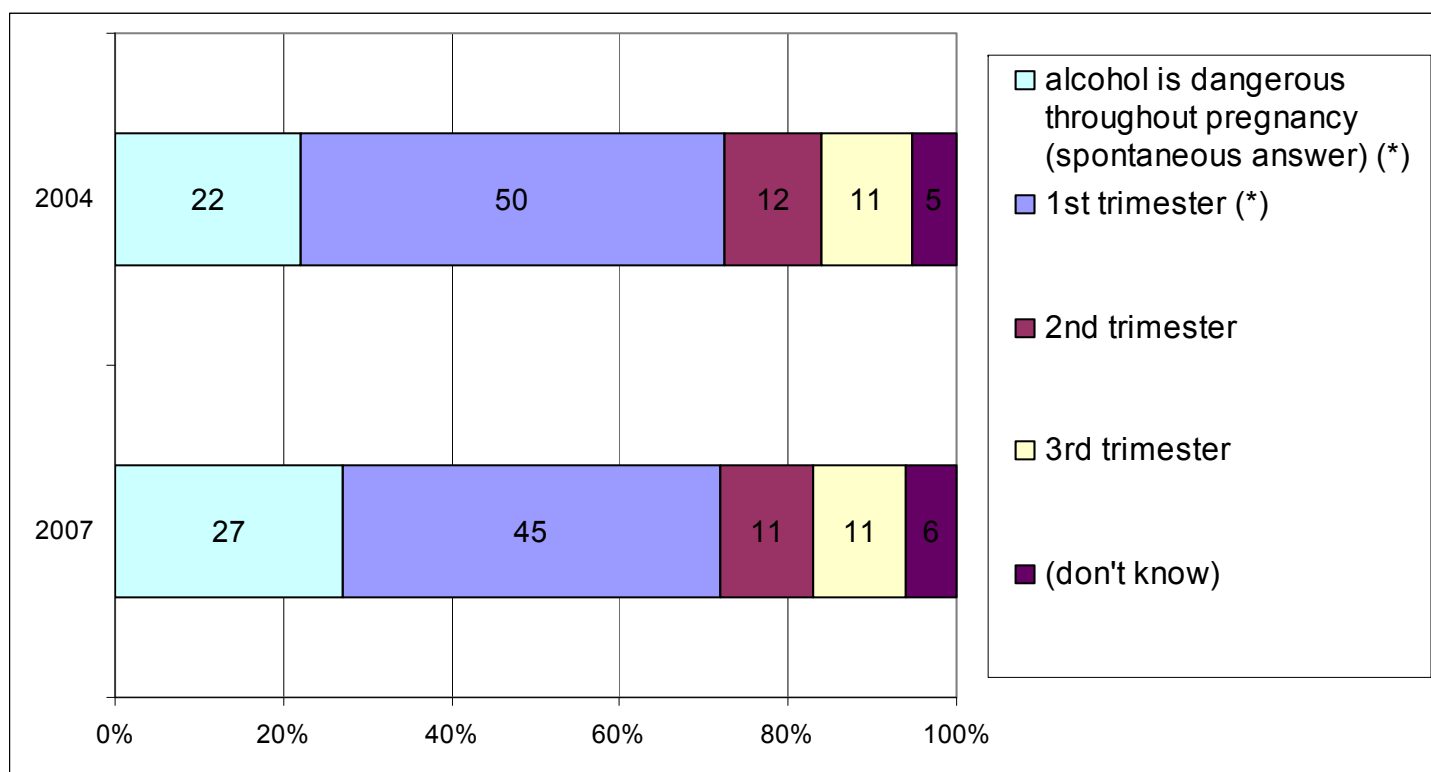
# Results: Drunkenness

Can getting drunk once during pregnancy be dangerous for the baby's health? (% , 2004 and 2007)



# Results: Pregnancy stage

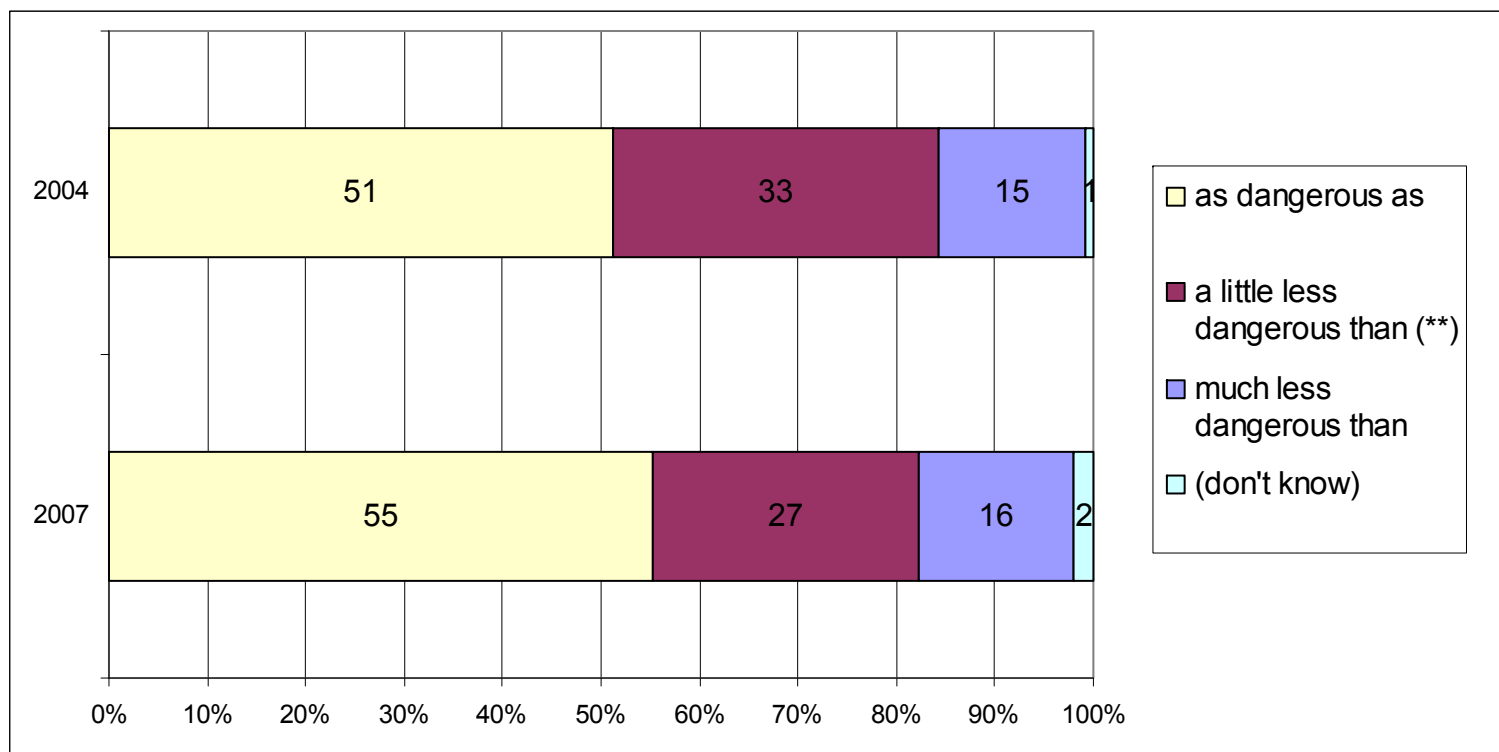
During what pregnancy stage is alcohol consumption the most dangerous for the baby's health? (% , 2004 and 2007)



# Results:

## Alcohol equivalence

If a pregnant woman drinks alcohol, are beer and wine [...] spirits for the baby's health? (% , 2004 and 2007)



# Association between knowledge and information exposure

OR adjusted for gender, age and education

	Question (desired response)	2004 Ref. (n=993)	2007	
			Unexposed (n=556)	Exposed (n=434)
1	it is recommended to drink a glass of wine once in a while during pregnancy (you think it is wrong)	-1-	0.8 *	1.4 *
2	it is recommended to drink a bit of beer during breastfeeding (you think it is wrong)	-1-	0.9	1.1
3	it is recommended not to drink alcohol at all during pregnancy (you think it is right)	-1-	1.1	2.6 ***
4	at what quantity does alcohol become dangerous (risk starts after the 1st drink)	-1-	1.2	1.5 **
5	what quantity is riskless (no drink is riskless)	-1-	1.4 **	2.2 ***
6	getting drunk once can be dangerous (yes)	-1-	0.8	1.6 **
7	pregnancy stage during which alcohol is most dangerous (danger throughout pregnancy)	-1-	1.2	1.3
8	beer and wine vs. spirits (as dangerous)	-1-	1.0	1.5 **

## Conclusion (1/2)

- Positive evolutions:
  - Social norms -> “no alcohol during pregnancy”
- Association with being exposed to information
  - Causation?
- Persistent distinction between fermented drinks and spirits
  - Stumbling block for prevention in the field of alcohol

## Conclusion (2/2)

- Long-term evolution?
- Impact on alcohol consumption during pregnancy?
- Increased awareness in the general public
  - Attributable to the publicity that surrounded the measure rather than to the health warning itself