

Scotland: Scotland should ban drinks sales in supermarkets: doctor

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By Christine Boggis

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Scotland should consider stopping supermarkets from selling alcohol, a leading Scottish psychiatrist has said.

Dr Peter Rice, chairman of the Royal College of Psychiatrists in Scotland and a consultant addictions psychiatrist at NHS Tayside Substance Misuse Service, said following countries such as Canada and New Zealand, where drinks sales are controlled in government-run shops, could reduce drink-related health problems.

He made the suggestion to MSPs in the Scottish government's Health & Sport Committee who are investigating a plan to set a minimum unit price for alcohol, the Press Association has reported.

Rice, who supports the policy, said: "The United Kingdom is unusual in that all of our alcohol is sold alongside all of our groceries. The UK has been very out of step with the rest of the world over the past 20 years.

"We should not lose sight of the fact that other countries do this sort of thing perfectly successfully, whereas we have a very free and de-regulated market for alcohol."

But he admitted that the plan might not win support.

Rice added that support for minimum unit pricing is "solid" among doctors.