

New study supports link between alcohol advertising and adolescent drinking

A study published today in the scientific journal *Addiction* finds that exposure to several different types of alcohol marketing is positively associated with the amount and frequency of drinking among adolescents across Europe.

These findings support the demand for legal restrictions of the amount of alcohol marketing in the European Union, where the Audio Visual Media Services Directive (AVMSD) is the only EU regulation currently in place. The AVMSD regulates the content of alcohol marketing in audiovisual media but does not restrict the amount of alcohol marketing on TV or elsewhere.

The study included more than 9,000 adolescents in Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, and Poland. The average age was 14 years. The students reported their drinking frequency and binge drinking as well as their exposure to a wide range of alcohol marketing, including television ads; online marketing; sponsorship of sports, music events, or festivals; ownership of alcohol branded promotional items; receipt of free samples; and exposure to price offers.

The data showed that exposure to alcohol marketing of all kinds was positively associated with adolescents' alcohol use over time. This link was found in four countries of varying cultural, regulatory and drinking contexts. A causal connection cannot be proved with this kind of study but the findings are clearly a cause for concern.

Lead author Avalon de Bruijn, of the European Centre for Monitoring Alcohol Marketing (EUCAM), says "Europe is the world's heaviest drinking region, and youth drinking is particularly problematic. Our study highlights the need to restrict the volume of alcohol marketing to which young people are exposed in everyday life. It's no longer just a matter of restricting television ads; policymakers need to examine the alcohol industry's total marketing scheme and develop regulations that will reduce all types of alcohol marketing."

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For editors:

De Bruijn A, Tanghe J, de Leeuw R, Engels R, Anderson P, Beccaria F, Bujalski M, Celata C, Gosselt J, SchreckenberG D, SÅ,odownik L, Wothge J, and van Dalen W (2016) European longitudinal study on the relationship between adolescents' alcohol marketing exposure and alcohol use. *Addiction* 111: [doi: 10.1111/add.13455](https://doi.org/10.1111/add.13455)

Media seeking interviews with co-author Wim van Dalen, Director of the Dutch Institute for Alcohol Policy, should contact him by telephone (+31 653295544) or email (wvandalen@stap.nl).

Addiction is a monthly international scientific journal publishing peer-reviewed research reports on alcohol, illicit drugs, tobacco, and gambling as well as editorials and other debate pieces. Owned by the Society for the Study of Addiction, it has been in continuous publication since 1884. *Addiction* is the number one journal in the 2016 ISI Journal Citation Reports ranking in the substance abuse category for both science and social science editions.