

GROUP AGAINST LIQUOR ADVERTISING (GALA)

FACT SHEET ON ALCOHOL ADVERTISING

Historical Introduction

- 1981 Advertising of alcohol retail outlets on broadcast media permitted.
- 1987 Advertising of alcohol corporate and sports sponsorship permitted.
- 1991 Brand name alcohol advertising on television and radio was first permitted. The decision was made by Cabinet. It was not debated in Parliament.
- Voluntary codes or restrictions were applied. These include no TV brand name advertising before 9pm (now 8.30pm). Sponsorship advertising was permitted at any time, except around children's programmes. Radio advertising was permitted at any time. The broadcasters gave some free air-time to moderation advertising, mainly by ALAC and the Land Transport Safety Authority.
- The voluntary codes are administered by the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) (which has jurisdiction over cinema, billboard, press and other advertising too).
- Codes are monitored by the public and complaints may be made to the Advertising Standards Complaints Board (an industry body) and the Broadcasting Standards Authority (a statutory body). The BSA is required to encourage the development and observance by broadcasters of codes of broadcasting practice in relation to restrictions on liquor promotion.
- The codes have been reviewed three times by panels appointed by the ASA. On each occasion submissions recommending a ban on broadcast alcohol advertising have far outnumbered those in favour of continuing it. In 2003 the panel brought TV alcohol advertising forward to 8.30pm.

Exposure to Alcohol Advertising

- 5- to 17-year-olds see on average 400 to 500 TV alcohol advertisements per year. For many, alcohol ads are their favourite TV ads. (1) & (2)
- On Friday nights 51% of children watch TV after 8.30pm, and 62% on Saturday nights. 31% were still watching at 10pm on Saturdays. (3)

Effect of Alcohol Advertising

A. New Zealand Research

- Alcohol advertisements appeal to children and teenagers. Many thought that drinking the product would result in them having more fun, being stronger, or having other qualities portrayed in the advertisement. Many said they felt encouraged to drink after watching the advertisements. (4)
- New Zealand research shows that alcohol advertising undermines alcohol education messages and that children under 18 are exposed to it as much as those over 18 years. (32)
- A longitudinal study in Dunedin explored relationships between alcohol consumption at age 18 years and earlier recall of alcohol seen in mass media (including commercial alcohol advertising). (5) Males who recalled more alcohol advertisements at age 15 years consumed more beer at age 18 years than those who recalled fewer advertisements, but females who recalled more alcohol advertisements at age 13 drank beer less frequently as 18-year-olds.
- Similarly, when that same sample of adolescents in the Dunedin longitudinal study was questioned at ages 18 years and 21 years about alcohol consumption, the volume of beer consumed at age 21 was significantly influenced by liking for alcohol advertising at age 18. (24)

- Based on the same cohort, Casswell and colleagues (2002) studied 714 participants who were alcohol drinkers at ages 18, 21 and 26 years, and found that liking for alcohol advertising at age 18 was linked to more frequent drinking among men between the ages of 18 and 26 years. (25)
- Among 10- to 13-year-old boys, half said that they knew more about drinking from watching alcohol ads. Liking the ads was associated with drinking because of the feeling that 'drinking makes life more fun and exciting' and 'people get on better when they have a few drinks'. (1)
- Over the 10-year period 1990 to 1999, 14- to 17-year-olds doubled the amount they drank on a typical drinking occasion. They drank 2–3 drinks in 1990, and 5–6 in 1999. This coincides with the period in which alcohol advertising on TV and radio were introduced. (6)
- Much alcohol advertising penetrates and worsens youth drinking culture. Some of it is advertising intoxication e.g. Export Gold "The best weekend you'll never remember." (17)

B. Overseas Research

- A US study found that alcohol advertising was a contributing factor to motor vehicle fatalities. A ban on broadcast advertising could result in a reduction of between 200 to 3000 road deaths annually. (7)
- Countries that introduced alcohol advertising bans had significantly lower consumption and alcohol-related vehicle crashes. (8)
- Exposure to advertising increases the frequency of drinking and reinforces pro-drinking attitudes. (9) (26-28)
- A US survey of 10- and 11-year-olds found that those who could identify more beer ads tended to drink more frequently as adults. (10)
- Another US study found that, among a group of 2,250 middle-school students (12–13-year-olds) in Los Angeles, those who viewed more television programmes containing alcohol commercials while in the seventh grade were more likely in the eighth grade to drink beer, wine/liquor, or to drink three or more drinks on at least one occasion during the month prior to the follow-up survey. (30)
- Young people with more positive affective responses to alcohol advertising hold more favourable drinking expectancies, perceive greater social approval for drinking, believe drinking is more common among peers and adults, and intend to drink more as adults. (21)
- 14-year-olds with greater exposure to advertisements in magazines, at sporting and music events and on television are more advertisement-aware than those with less exposure, as are teens who watch more TV, pay attention to beer advertisements and know adults who drink. (22)
- Amongst 10- to 17-year-olds, the perceived likeability of beer advertisements is a function of the positive affective responses evoked by the specific elements featured in the advertisements. Liking of specific elements featured in beer advertisements, such as humour, animation and popular music, significantly contribute to the overall likeability of these advertisements and subsequently to advertising effectiveness indicated by an intent to purchase the product and brand promoted by the advertisements. (23)
- The amount drunk correlates with advertising expenditure. A \$1 per capita increase in expenditure resulted in a 3% increase in consumption. (18)
- Self-regulation of alcohol marketing is favoured by industry groups in most countries, but no evidence supports its effectiveness. Studies show that self-regulation does not prevent types of marketing that can affect young people. (29)

How Alcohol Advertising Works

- Alcohol advertising glamorises and normalises drinking. Drinking is portrayed as part of attractive lifestyles which appear within the reach of normal aspirations. Many alcohol ads are designed to meet important needs among young people. (11)

- Research has linked exposure to portrayals of alcohol use in the mass media with the development of positive drinking expectancies by children and adolescents. (19, 20)
- “The liquor industry isn’t selling bottles or glasses or even liquor. It is selling fantasies.” (12)
- Alcohol advertising recruits new drinkers, encourages greater consumption in current drinkers, and makes it more difficult for those who want to give up.

New Technologies

- These are being exploited to advertise alcohol to youth. They include web sites with competitions, email, txting, E-cards, and downloads for wallpaper and screen savers. (2)

The Economics of Alcohol Advertising

- The liquor industry spends about \$35 million per year on advertising and more on sponsorship. (13)
- The cost of harm from alcohol is estimated at between \$2 billion (14), and \$16 billion annually. (15)
- This is borne by taxpayers through health, judicial, police, ACC, and social welfare systems.
- Government receives about \$600 million in alcohol tax per year.
- Teenagers from 14 to 17 drink about \$2.7million worth of alcohol per week. (16)

Countries with Alcohol Advertising Bans

- Bulgaria, Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, France, Iceland, India, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Russia, Sweden, Switzerland, Taiwan, Turkey, Ukraine and Muslim countries ban broadcast alcohol advertising.
- Other countries have partial bans e.g. Belgium bans advertising on State TV and all radio, Denmark bans ads for alcohol over 2.25%, Ireland bans spirits advertising on TV and radio, Portugal bans TV ads before 10pm.

A Framework Convention for Alcohol Control

- Calls for a Framework Convention for Alcohol Control (FCAC) come from a range of sectors, including professional, academic, and NGO sectors, as well as in WHO publications. (31) Key elements needed by an FCAC include: price measures; restrictions on advertising, promotion and sponsorship; and communication and dissemination of scientific information.

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updated: August 2009