

Youths Use Drink Labels to Choose Strongest Drink at Lowest Cost

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Contrary to the industry's position that visible drink labels will promote responsible drinking, young people are, instead, using these visible standard drink labels to increase or even maximize the amount of alcohol they consume at the lowest cost possible.

According to a study in the *Drug and [Alcohol Review Journal](#)* published by Wiley-Blackwell, [young people](#) in Australia have very high awareness of standard drink labeling. However, this was predominately to help them choose the drinks that would get them drunk in the shortest time possible. The labels also served as guides, 'advising' them on which drink would reduce the time needed to get drunk and the least amount they would need to drink - hence getting the best 'value' for their money.

The study entitled "The impact of more visible standard drink labeling on youth [alcohol consumption](#): helping young people drink (ir)responsibly?" examines the young people's perceptions of standard drink labeling, the purposes for which they use the labels and the potential impact on their alcohol consumption.

"Participants generally agreed that they notice drink labels and take in account what to purchase and consume. While earlier research with adult beer and alcohol drinkers has shown that standard drink labeling enables them to drink safely and responsibly, this motivation is not evident in the consumption choices with young drinkers and might even be counter-productive", said co-author Professor Sandra Jones from the Centre for Health Initiatives, University of Wollongong.

Heavy episodic drinking is a major health issue for Australia, as it is for most developed countries. It has been estimated that, from 1993-2002, over 2500 young people aged 15-24 have died from alcohol-attributable injury and disease, with another 100,000 hospitalized.

Professor Jones adds, "There is a need to consider the deeper implications about alcohol packaging and marketing as they have real potential to impact and reduce alcohol-related harms. There is still an important role for standard drink labeling as long as it is combined with other policies addressing the price, availability and marketing of alcohol - which are of proven effectiveness in reducing alcohol related harm."

More information: This article is published in the May Issue of *Drug and Alcohol Review*. (Vol. 28, Issue 3, pp 230 - 234) The article abstract is available at: [www3.interscience.wiley.com/jo ... /121638204/abstract](http://www3.interscience.wiley.com/jo.../121638204/abstract)

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