

Alcohol brand placement on TV linked with teens' brand preferences and drinking behaviors

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While tobacco companies have not been allowed to buy product placement in television shows since 2000, alcohol brands continue to self-regulate their marketing in media. But a new research abstract to be presented at the Pediatric Academic Societies 2016 Meeting showing how strongly alcohol brand placement relates to the drinking behavior of underage youth suggests more regulation may be needed.

For the study, "Alcohol Brand Placement in Television Shows: A Content Coding Analysis and Comparison with Youth Brand Preference," researchers measured the alcohol-related content, including [brand placements](#), of 10 popular television shows. They found an average of more than two [alcohol brand](#) placements per show episode, with some shows featuring more than 13 brand placements per episode. There was a variety of brands with a strong presence on the shows, but some were more prominent than others. Budweiser was far and away the most frequently occurring brand placement, representing 12 percent of all appearances, followed by Heineken (7 percent of all placements) and Dos Equis (6 percent of all placements).

Researchers then asked more than 2,600 youth between the ages of 15 and 20 how much they watched these 10 shows, along with questions about their drinking behavior and favorite alcohol brand. The brands that were most prominent across the TV shows tended to be the brands that underage youth chose as their favorite, according to the study. Youth

who reported higher levels of watching TV shows with more prominent brand placement also reported higher levels of problematic drinking behavior, like binge drinking.

"Despite alcohol company reports in a 2012 Federal Trade Commission summary that they pay little for brand placement of their products, highly advertised brands appeared commonly in some TV shows popular with underage youth. This raises the question of whether companies are accurately reporting such payments to government regulators," said lead author Joy Gabrielli, PhD, a clinical child psychologist and postdoctoral research fellow at Dartmouth College & Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center, who notes that television remains one of the most widely consumed media by [youth](#) in the United States.

"The current approach to alcohol self-regulation in television media represents a failure of our government to protect children from alcohol industry marketing," Dr. Gabrielli said. "Parents should be aware that it is highly likely their children will be exposed to alcohol brand placements if they watch TV shows rated TV-PG or higher, and that this could affect their [drinking behavior](#)."

"Given the significant health implications of underage drinking, the Federal Trade Commission needs to place more emphasis on monitoring and limiting alcohol brand placement of alcohol in media," she said. Study authors also conclude that the TV ratings system (TV-PG, TV-14, TV-MA) should address the level of alcohol brand placement in each episode.

More information: www.abstracts2view.com/pas/view...hp?nu=PAS16L1_1360.7

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