

Kids can't escape alcohol marketing

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One of the images taken from the Kids'Cam cameras showing the alcohol advertising children are exposed to in supermarkets. Credit: University of Otago

New Zealand children are exposed to alcohol marketing on nearly every visit to the supermarket, innovative camera research from Otago and Auckland Universities reveals.

The research found [children](#) were exposed to [alcohol](#) marketing on 85

per cent of their visits to supermarkets, often near bread and milk or near the entrance.

Lead researcher Tim Chambers says the study provides further evidence of the need to ban [alcohol sales](#) in supermarkets. This is feasible given we have prohibited alcohol sales in supermarkets in the past and other countries, such as Australia, currently do. Moreover, supermarkets make up only three per cent of alcohol retailers but sell 30 per cent of all beer and 60 per cent of all wine.

"Children in the study were exposed to alcohol marketing almost every time they entered a supermarket, often the exposure occurred near everyday products, like bread and milk," says Tim Chambers, research fellow at Department of Public Health at the University of Otago, Wellington.

"This suggests alcohol is just another ordinary commodity, just another product on the shelves - a 'normal' part of the grocery shop," he says. This research was published in the journal *Health & Place* and reports on an auxiliary study of the Kids'Cam Study, which examined the frequency and nature of children's exposure to food and beverage marketing.

The exposure occurred despite a law change to reduce alcohol marketing exposure within supermarkets," says Chambers.

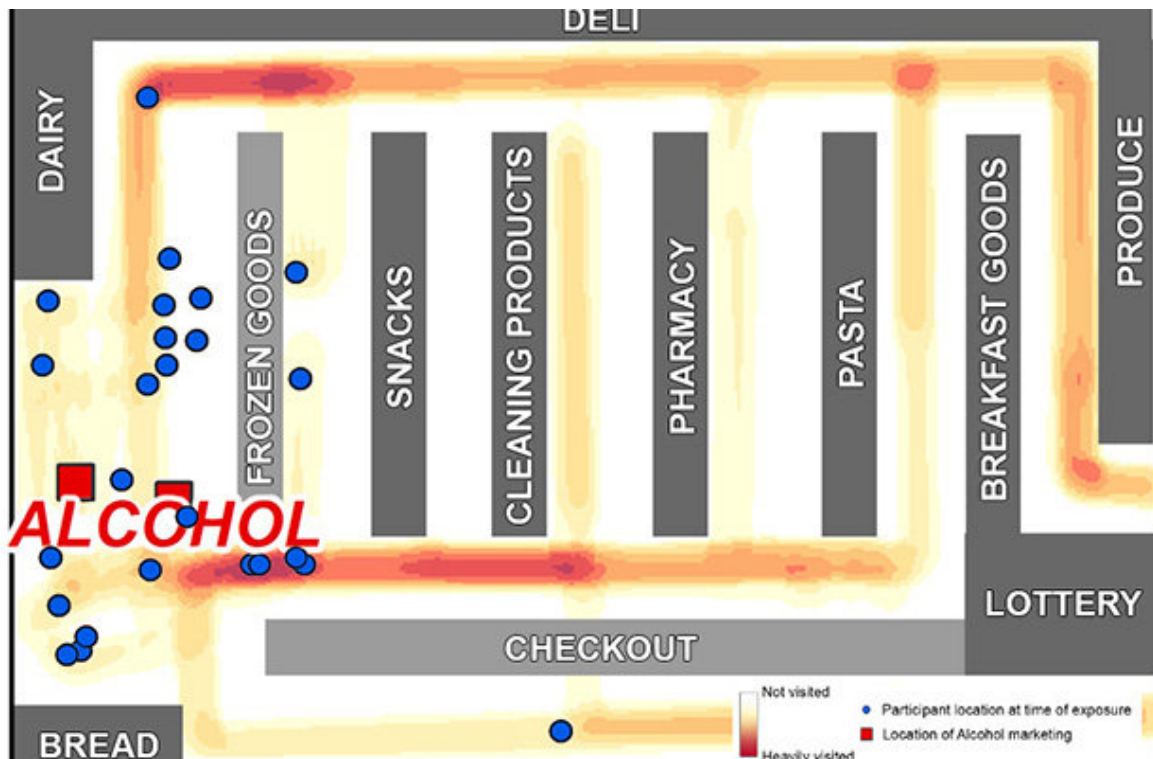


Diagram showing alcohol placement in a typical NZ supermarket, supplied by Kids'Cam. Credit: University of Otago

Children's exposure to alcohol marketing in a setting frequented regularly by children highlights the need for further restrictions. The researchers are calling for urgent Government action to restrict alcohol marketing surrounding children to reduce alcohol-related harm.

"The findings are a real concern given exposure to alcohol marketing increases children's [alcohol consumption](#) and alcohol-related harm. In particular, research has shown exposure to alcohol marketing within supermarkets increases children's consumption, including starting to drink at earlier ages," Chambers says.

The study, Kids'Cam, is a world first. The researchers used automated

wearable cameras and GPS units to study the children's world. 168 children between the ages of 11 and 13 took part in the study, wearing the devices which recorded photos every seven seconds and locations every five seconds over four days.

The children were randomly selected and recruited from 16 randomly selected schools in the Wellington region. Alcohol marketing contributes to the worldwide burden of alcohol-related harm.

In New Zealand, alcohol contributes to 800 deaths and costs the country over \$5 billion per year. Moreover, alcohol is linked to over 200 medical conditions and causes a number of cancers. World Health Organization (WHO) Global Alcohol Strategy recommends restrictions on alcohol marketing as a 'best buy' for reducing alcohol-related harm. New Zealand supermarkets have some responsibility for the burden of alcohol-related harm due to their provision of convenient, low-cost alcohol as well as their [market](#) share of alcohol sales.

In New Zealand, supermarkets were not permitted to sell alcohol until the liberalisation of the alcohol laws in 1989. The researchers say that improving the supermarket promotional environment, by repealing the section of the 2012 Sale and Supply of Alcohol Act that permits supermarket alcohol sales, would both significantly reduce children's overall [exposure](#) to [alcohol marketing](#), and reduce the prevalence of other [supermarket](#) related infractions such as underage sales, loss-leading alcohol sales and cross-promotional activity. Further, it would save councils millions of dollars from the judicial challenges by supermarkets against Local Alcohol Policies.

"Our research shows the legislation is not working. It is time for government to take alcohol sales out of supermarkets," says Chambers.

Provided by University of Otago

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