

Supersized alcopops linked to homelessness and gang affiliation, new regulation needed

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Dr. Matthew Rossheim led the study that found that among adults on probation, those who were gang-affiliated or recently experienced homelessness were far more likely to have recently consumed supersized alcopops in the past 30 days. Credit: George Mason University

Supersized alcopops are single-serving flavored beverages with very high alcohol content. Consumption of these drinks is linked to dangerous

consequences such as blacking out, vomiting, being injured or worse, and they are popular among underage drinkers, which is where prior research has typically focused.

However, supersized alcopops can be dangerous for everyone—regardless of age. New research led by George Mason University's College of Health and Human Services was the first to examine individual factors linked to recent consumption of supersized alcopops among adults on [probation](#). The study was published today in *Alcoholism: Clinical and Experimental Research*.

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Among those who experienced homelessness, 30% consumed supersized alcopops, compared to 11% of those who did not experience homelessness. Further, 57% of those who were gang-affiliated reported consuming a supersized alcopop within the past 30 days compared to 11% of those who were not gang-affiliated.

Adults on probation who had consumed supersized alcopops in the past 30 days had higher scores for hostility and risk-taking, and lower scores for [self-esteem](#) on the Criminal Justice Client Evaluation of Self and Treatment Intake (CJ-CEST) than non-consumers.

The researchers surveyed 253 adults (70% male) on probation in two large metropolitan areas: Baltimore City, MD and Dallas, TX who reported heavy drinking or any illicit drug use in the past 90 days.

"The marketing and retail availability of these products may be creating and perpetuating health disparities, by targeting historically

disenfranchised communities," explains Rossheim. "Better regulation of supersized alcopop marketing is urgently needed to reduce dangerous alcohol consumption—particularly among high-risk groups, including people who are homeless, [gang members](#), and display more hostility and risk-taking traits."

More information: Matthew E. Rossheim et al, Supersized Alcopop Consumption Associated With Homelessness and Gang Membership, *Alcoholism: Clinical and Experimental Research* (2020). [DOI: 10.1111/acer.14469](#)

Provided by George Mason University

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