

Alcohol 'promotion' detracted from success of Women's World Cup, says new commentary

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Broadcasters should avoid focusing on alcohol in crowd shots during major sporting events, such as this summer's Women's World Cup final,

say researchers.

In a new commentary published in the *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine*, researchers from the Technological University of the Shannon and the University of Galway in the Republic of Ireland suggest that the "thorny issue of [alcohol](#)" detracted from the success of the record-breaking tournament.

The authors, Dr. Frank Houghton and Daisy Houghton, highlight a "highly problematic" moment during the final between England and Spain, which was broadcast to tens of millions worldwide. Around 30 minutes into the match, the camera focused on a fan celebrating Spain's winning goal while holding a cup of beer.

Such coverage "highlights, normalizes and glamorizes [alcohol consumption](#), as well as showing positives rather than [negative consequences](#)," say the authors. "It also has connotations such as: fans drink alcohol, fans drink while watching sport and drinking alcohol can make you the center of attention. One aspect of particular concern is the substantial youth audience that were undoubtedly watching this Cup Final match, particularly young girls."

They argue that the health impacts of alcohol consumption warrant tighter regulation of broadcasters. They say, "Alcohol is an important negative commercial determinant of health for both men and women, with alcohol noted as a significant predictor of breast cancer in women in particular. The UK and Ireland have an established problem with alcohol and as such this form of de facto alcohol promotion is highly problematic."

The authors call for an alcohol-oriented equivalent of the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, which they say has been a "significant factor" in controlling tobacco promotion.

However, even this would not be enough; [media coverage](#), because it is not paid advertising, would "fall through the cracks of such international agreements," they add. "However, an undertaking to avoid a focus on alcohol in crowd shots could easily be included in contractual agreements between broadcasters and those agencies filming [sports events](#) and would quickly solve this issue, particularly if financial penalties for non-adherence were included. The implementation of such a contractual rule in negotiations for State-funded television channels should be relatively easy, although more extended work by Public Health advocates may be required with for-profit broadcasters."

More information: The Women's Soccer World Cup Final 2023: gender equity and alcohol promotion, *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine* (2023). [DOI: 10.1177/01410768231202656](https://doi.org/10.1177/01410768231202656)

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