Should we ban alcohol advertising?

Reducing the harm caused by alcohol: A co-ordinated European response

Peter Anderson, MD, MPH, PhD
13 November 2007
1. Alcohol and tobacco’s contribution to harm are not so dissimilar
2. Alcohol cheats the brain
3. Young people are particularly vulnerable to alcohol
4. Alcohol advertisements increase the desire to drink alcohol
5. Alcohol advertisements increase young people’s drinking
6. Alcohol advertising rules require approximation across Europe
7. Even today, self-regulation is abused
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DIRECTIVE 2003/33/EC OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL
of 26 May 2003
on the approximation of the laws, regulations and administrative provisions of the Member States
relating to the advertising and sponsorship of tobacco products
## Burden of disease in 2000 attributable to tobacco, alcohol and illicit drugs by development status of region and sex

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>High mortality developing region</th>
<th>Low mortality developing regions – emerging economies</th>
<th>Developed regions</th>
<th>World</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Both</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total DALYs (000s)</strong></td>
<td>420,711</td>
<td>412,052</td>
<td>832,763</td>
<td>223,181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smoking and oral tobacco</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illicit drugs</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: WHO 2002
Alcohol increases the risk of cancer of the oesophagus.

Source: Bagnardi et al 2001
Stopping drinking reduces the risk of cancer of the oesophagus

Source: Rehm et al 2007
But, what about heart disease?

This is what the WHO Expert Committee had to say this year.
1. Epidemiological studies have found a preventive effect of regular light drinking (as little as a drink every second day), although the findings remains controversial, and appear to be confined to males over the age of 45 years and females past menopause.

2. However, heavy drinking bouts are associated with increased rates of heart attacks.

3. Even in societies where heart disease is a very important cause of death, the overall number of lost years of life attributable to drinking outweighs the saved years attributable to protective effects.

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Alcohol cheats the brain

By interfering with the brain's nerve transmitters, alcohol disrupts calculations made by the brain's reward circuits, such that the brain underestimates the value of alcohol whether or not the alcohol helped or hurt. Alcohol is overvalued by the drinker, favouring working harder to get it, compared with non-alcohol rewards even though the costs increase, with the drinker overvaluing alcohol to the size of this gap.

Source: Redish 2004
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alcohol use disorders in adolescence lead to reduced volume of the hippocampus

The hippocampus being part of the forebrain, and playing a part in memory and spatial navigation

Source: DeBellis et al 2000
alcohol use disorders in adolescence lead to reduced volume of the hippocampus

\[ \text{Subjects With Alcohol Use Disorders} \]

\[ \text{Comparison Subjects} \]

10% reduction

\[ ^a \text{Hippocampal volumes in subjects with alcohol use disorders (mean=8.10 cm}^3, \text{SD}=0.70) \text{ were significantly lower than those of healthy comparison subjects (mean=9.02 cm}^3, \text{SD}=1.05) (F=7.11, \text{df}=1, 33, p=0.01). \]

Source: DeBellis et al 2000
Brain activation in adolescents with alcohol use disorders

Figure 1. Alcoholic beverage pictures task design and stimuli samples.

Source: Tapert et al 2003
Brain activation in adolescents with alcohol use disorders

Brain areas that deal with reward activated when shown alcohol pictures

Source: Tapert et al 2003
Brain activation in adolescents with alcohol use disorders

Brain activation in reward areas when shown alcohol pictures compared with no alcohol pictures.

**Figure 3.** Blood oxygen level--dependent (BOLD) response signal contrast in the right precuneus/posterior cingulate region during exposure to alcoholic beverage pictures relative to nonalcoholic beverage pictures plotted as a function of drinks consumed per month for adolescents with alcohol use disorder (n=15; r=0.76 [P<.001]).

Source: Tapert et al 2003
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The Impact of Alcohol Advertising

ELSA project report on the evidence to strengthen regulation to protect young people

http://www.stap.nl/elsa/elsa_project/introduction.htm
1. Young people are particularly drawn to elements of music, characters, story and humour.

2. Young people who like advertisements believe that positive consequences of drinking are more likely, their peers drink more frequently, and their peers approve more of drinking.

3. These beliefs interact to produce a greater likelihood of drinking, or of intention to drink in the near future.

Source: Anderson (2007)
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The Impact of Alcohol Advertising.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Age group (years)</th>
<th>Follow-up (months)</th>
<th>Outcome at follow-up</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Robinson et al (1998)</td>
<td>US</td>
<td>14-15</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Each 1-hour increase in television viewing associated with a 9% increased risk for initiating drinking. Each 1-hour increase in watching music videos associated with a 31% increased risk for initiating drinking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wingood et al (2003)</td>
<td>US</td>
<td>14-18</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>High exposure to rap music leads to 1.5 times greater likelihood to use alcohol over 12 month period compared with low exposure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stacy et al. (2004)</td>
<td>US</td>
<td>11-12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Those who watched 60% more alcohol advertisements on TV were 44% more likely to have used beer, 34% more likely to have ever used wine/liquor, and 26% more likely to have had 3 or more drinks on one occasion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Van Den Bluck &amp; Beullens (2005)</td>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>13 + 16</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Quantity of alcohol consumed while going out related to overall TV viewing and their music video exposure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ellickson et al. (2005)</td>
<td>US</td>
<td>13-15</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>Exposure to in-store beer displays, advertising in magazines and beer concession stands at sports or music events predicted drinking onset for non-drinkers after 2 years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snyder et al. (2006)</td>
<td>US</td>
<td>15-26</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>For every 4% more alcohol advertisements seen on TV, radio, billboards and in magazines drank 1% more drinks per month, and for every 15% more exposure in their media market on alcohol advertising, drank 3% more drinks per month.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sargent et al (2006)</td>
<td>US</td>
<td>10-14</td>
<td>12-24</td>
<td>Significant linear and quadratic relationship between movie alcohol exposure and initiation of drinking, with a higher dose-effect relationship at lower movie alcohol exposure levels compared to higher levels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McClure et al. (2006) [Same study as Sargent et al (2006)]</td>
<td>US</td>
<td>10-14</td>
<td>12-24</td>
<td>Owners of alcohol branded merchandise had higher rates of alcohol initiation (25%) compared with non-owners (13.1%).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Van Den Bluck et al (2006)</td>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>13 + 16</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>For each additional hour of TV viewed per day, the respondents were 19% more likely to be drinkers of alcopops when going out (OR = 1.186).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Similar results have been found for smoking behaviour, where a systematic review found:

- Evidence, from 9 longitudinal studies following up a total of over 12,000 baseline non-smokers that exposure to tobacco advertising and promotion was associated with the likelihood that adolescents will start to smoke

- No studies were found that did not show an effect

(Lovato et al. 2003)
Similar results have been found for food preferences, where a systematic review found:

- evidence, from 11 studies, that exposure to food promotion influences children’s food consumption behaviour;
- evidence, from 13 studies that food promotion influences children’s brand preferences and their category preferences

(Hastings et al. 2003)
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Regulation of Alcohol Marketing in Europe

ELSA project overview on the existing regulations on advertising and marketing of alcohol

http://www.stap.nl/elsa/elsa_project/introduction.htm
Number of type of regulations by country
All countries, with the exception of the UK have at least one type of ban in their regulations, with bans being much more common in statutory as opposed to non-statutory regulations.
1. As has been the case with tobacco products, the differences in national legislation are likely to give rise to increasing barriers to the free movement between countries of the products or services that serve as the support for such advertising.

2. There is a strong argument that these barriers should be eliminated and, to this end, the rules relating to the advertising of alcoholic products should in specific cases be approximated across Europe.

3. In particular, there is a need to specify the extent to which alcohol advertising in certain categories of media and publications is allowed.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inbev</td>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anheuser-Busch</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SABMiller</td>
<td>UK</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heineken</td>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carlsberg</td>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total share of top five</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>15%</strong></td>
<td><strong>48%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Jernigan 2006
Affiliated member of European Commission’s Alcohol and Health Forum
In which members agree to pledge commitments to protect children and young people and to prevent irresponsible commercial alcohol communication and sales.
Amongst other topics, the Forum plans to focus on:

- provision of adequate consumer information
- information and education programmes on harmful drinking and on responsible patterns of consumption
- Prevention of irresponsible commercial communication and sales
To promote breast cancer awareness
During October 2007, Heineken sponsored Pink Ribbon
Alcohol causes breast cancer

Breast cancer per 1,000 women by age 80

Drinks per day

Source: Collaborative Group on Hormonal Factors in Breast Cancer 2002
Club Beer Tender promotes drinking at home

Each Beer Tender barrel has a code

If you drink 2 Beer Tender barrels each month, you become a Silver Member, which gives you privileges and discounts and the chance of winning things (e.g. football tickets, festival tickets or an 'ultimate kick' such as driving in a Formula 1 car or 6 days in Vegas)
If you drink at least 3 barrels per month, you become a Gold Member, which gives you more privileges, higher discounts and higher chances of winning.
These ads appeared in French newspapers during the world Rugby cup in October 2007 and broke the French advertising law.
The ‘loi Evin’

• No advertising is permitted:
  - when targeted to young people
  - on TV and cinema

• No sponsorship is permitted

• Messages and images should refer only to the qualities of the products
1. The advertisements linked beer and sport with the form and placement of the advertisements in a stadium (sports sponsorship)

2. For “a fresher world” does not describe the quality of the product nor how it can be drunk

- a pack of beer looking like a rugby team
- and a glass looking like a rugby ball
3. 2340 is on an industry web and is seen as an association of commercial communication and sport.
Three questions:
How does this square (correspond) with the provision of adequate consumer information on the risks of alcohol?
How does this square with reducing harmful drinking and promoting responsible patterns of consumption?
How does this square with being trusted to self-regulate irresponsible commercial communication?
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¾ of EU citizens agree that alcohol advertising targeting young people should be banned in all Member States

Source: Eurobarometer 2007
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In 2002, the French Government was taken to court, alleging that the Loi Evin, by prohibiting alcohol advertising on hoardings visible during the retransmission of bi-national sporting events on TV, entail restrictions on the freedom to provide advertising services and television broadcasting services. In other words, you could not re-broadcast British football matches in France.
1. It is in fact undeniable that advertising acts as an encouragement to consumption.

2. The French rules on television advertising are appropriate to ensure their aim of protecting public health.

3. They do not go beyond what is necessary to achieve such an objective.
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A programme, combining an advertising ban, increased taxation, and widespread brief advice by physicians to at risk drinkers could reduce the burden of alcohol by nearly 1/3, costing less than €1 billion a year, about 0.8% of the social costs of alcohol.
1. Alcohol and tobacco’s contribution to harm are not so dissimilar
2. Alcohol cheats the brain
3. Young people are particularly vulnerable to alcohol
4. To conclude...
5. Alcohol advertising rules require approximation across Europe
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1. From a public health perspective, the argument that alcohol policy cannot be the same as tobacco policy because alcohol is very different from tobacco is not a strong argument: alcohol and tobacco’s overall contribution to ill-health and the risk curves are not so dissimilar.

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<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total DALYs</td>
<td>455,373</td>
<td>214,213</td>
<td>761,562</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illicit drugs</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. Alcohol cheats the brain, leading the drinker to over value alcohol, such that people will ‘pay’ more to get alcohol than it is worth, giving alcohol an unfair market advantage, which can be corrected by policy interventions.
3. Young people are particularly vulnerable to alcohol, with detrimental effects on the developing adolescent brain, including neuro-cognitive impairment
4. Alcohol advertisements increase the desire of young people to drink alcohol, particularly those advertisements which are attractive to young people, including elements of music and humour.
5. 7 longitudinal studies have demonstrated an impact of alcohol advertisements increasing young people’s drinking. Acceptance of the impact of advertisements on smoking is based on 9 longitudinal studies. In neither case, have there been any longitudinal studies which have shown the converse.
6. Alcohol advertising rules require approximation across Europe: this was one of the main justifications for the ban on tobacco advertising
7. Even today, self-regulation is abused: an example was given of the world’s 4th largest brewer, at a time when they are committed to self-regulation of irresponsible commercial communication and sales.
8. ¾ of EU citizens agree that alcohol advertising targeting young people should be banned in all Member States.
9. European case law supports stricter regulations
10. Health impact assessment predicts that an advertising ban could save 3% of all alcohol-related ill health and premature death at a very modest cost.