

International Perspectives on Alcohol Marketing & Advertising: 1971-2021

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**As required by the Alcohol Policy 19 Conference,
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The authors have no conflict of interest to
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Introduction

Scope of alcohol promotion & advertising

- Advertising on TV, Radio, print
- Billboards and transit vehicles
- Social media
- Advertising in shopwindows and bars
- Alcohol depiction on TV shows, movies and streaming service
- Sponsorship of sports, cultural events, and cancer prevention events

Advertising:

- influences perceptions of alcohol, introduces new products,
- oriented to new users, and
- can influence drinking mores, attitudes, drinking and high risk drinking

Introduction - 2

- Advertising provides a bridge linking, pricing, physical availability and consumption
- This review was undertaken in order to obtain a snapshot of what is known about the association between alcohol marketing and high-risk drinking

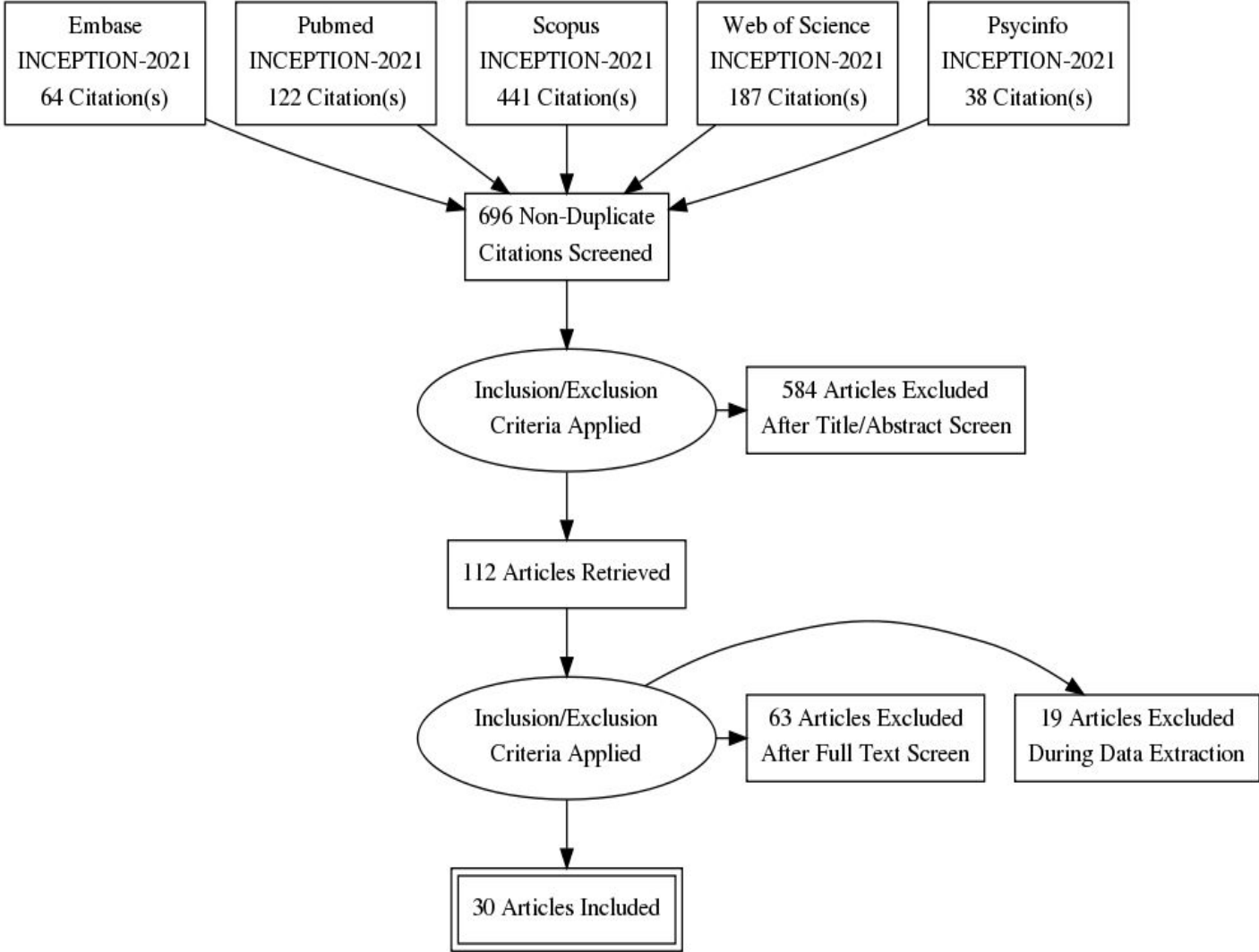
Methods - 1

- Conducted a rapid review of publications that were systematic reviews or meta-analysis of alcohol advertising and marketing
- We searched PsycINFO, Embase, Web of Science and Scopus from inception of each search engine until January 2021
- The results were imported, deduplicated and analysed in Covidence, a web-based literature review management program

Methods - 2

- Discrepancies were resolved by mutual agreement between ER and NG
- Reference lists of remaining papers were hand-searched for additional relevant studies
- We accepted the authors' definition that their publication was a systematic review or meta-analysis

Figure 1 - Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analysis (PRISMA) flow diagram



Results – Main Foci

- Youth & adolescents (14 reviews)
- Cognitive and neurological themes (3)
- Digital & internet marketing (3)
- Alcohol industry & marketing (5)
- Alcohol marketing & policy options (5)

Youth – Knowledge & Attitudes

- Consumer studies suggest a link between advertising & young people's drinking **knowledge, attitudes and behaviour**
- Alcohol advertising appears influence adolescents' attitudes towards alcohol, increase **positive expectations** regarding alcohol, and make alcohol **use appear more normative**

(Hastings et al. 2005; Berey, 2017)

Youth – Drinking Behaviour

- Evidence sufficient to conclude that alcohol consumption is affected by exposure to alcohol marketing.
- **Greater exposure** to advertising may be associated with an **increase in drinking** and, in, the likelihood that adolescents have ever tried alcohol.
- Significant associations between **exposure to**, awareness of, engagement with and/or receptivity to alcohol marketing at baseline and **initiation of alcohol use, initiation of binge drinking**, drinking in the previous 30 days and/or alcohol problems at follow-up.
- Evidence was stronger for initiation of or participation in binge drinking.

(Smith & Foxcroft, 2009; Jernigan et al. 2016; Sargent & Babor 2020)

Youth – High Risk Drinking

- **Exposure to media** and alcohol advertisements is associated with the likelihood that **adolescents will start to drink** alcohol, and with increased drinking among baseline drinker
- **Impact appears to be cumulative**, increasing their consumption as they move into their mid-20s and in markets with a greater amount of advertising.
- Consistent evidence that advertising exposure predicts initiation and increased drinking

(Pinsky et al. 2008; Anderson et al. 2009a; Scott et al. 2017;; Stockings et al. 2016; Bryden et al. 2012; Jiang et al. 2019)

Youth - Overview

- Relationships for alcohol promotion (e.g., alcohol-sponsored events) and owning alcohol-related merchandise exposures, were more consistently positive than for other advertising exposures.
- Associations were observed across the past four decades, in countries across continents, and with small and large samples.

(Finan et al. 2020)

Cognitive & Neurological Themes

- Exposure to alcohol advertisements **may increase immediate consumption of alcoholic beverages** by small amounts, equivalent to between 0.39 and 2.67 units for males and 0.25 to 1.69 units for female (10ml or 8g of pure alcohol)
- Youth preferred image advertisements that portray the appeal of drinking lifestyles
- Advertisements that associate alcohol with appealing contexts and may be more readily learned by adolescents, and may be less easily extinguished in this population

(Stautz et al. 2016; Henehan et al. 2020; Courtney et al.; 2020)

Digital Alcohol Marketing

- Exposure to both consumer and alcohol industry created content are likely to promote positive attitudes towards alcohol use, regular alcohol consumption, cultures of heavy and risky drinking, and alcohol-related problems and risk of developing alcohol use disorders among youth.
- Five out of the seven studies found digital marketing **increased intention to drink alcohol**, while eight out of 10 studies found **digital marketing increased actual alcohol consumption**.
- Engagement with digital alcohol marketing was positively associated with alcohol use and increased binge or hazardous drinking behaviour

(Gupta et al. 2016; Buchanan et al. 2018; Cooutney et a; 2020)

Alcohol Industry & Marketing -1

- The 57 studies reviewed from 18 countries demonstrate high exposure to alcohol advertising and **high awareness of alcohol advertising among youth.**
- Industry self-regulation of alcohol advertising does not show evidence of efficacy and does not prevent alcohol advertising directed at children and adolescents
- The **compliance process lacks standardization across countries**, potential inadequate training across adjudicators, or involving a conflict of interest.

(Vendrame & Pinsky 2011; Noel & Babor, 2020; Noel et al. 2017)

Alcohol Industry & Marketing - 2

- Recurring key policy issues for alcohol industry include: taxation, the regulation of marketing, and product design.
- Although there is some inconsistency across policy issues, widespread success in policy influence is evident.
- **Five industry tactics:**
 - Provide inaccurate or misrepresent evidence;
 - Form alliances with other sectors to give the impression of large support for the industry's position;
 - Propose alternative policies;
 - Use the legal system; and
 - Provide financial incentives or disincentives

(McCambridge et al. 2019; Savell et al. 2016)

Marketing & Policy Options - 1

- An umbrella review and quality assessment of systematic reviews of alcohol control interventions. The authors conclude that the current evidence base is uncertain. However, given the low risk of bias in the more recent studies, and the integration of the results with a thorough quality assessment, they agree that restricting alcohol advertising is possibly beneficial in the short-term (limited to a few hours).

(Siegfried et al. 2019).

Marketing & Policy Options - 2

- A Cochrane review examined restricting or banning alcohol advertising and impact on alcohol consumption. The data arising from the included studies did not show a clear effect for or against banning or restricting alcohol advertising
- There is a positive association between **exposure to alcohol sports sponsorship and increased alcohol consumption amongst adult sports people and schoolchildren**. Amongst adult sports people, direct-to-user sponsorship in the form of free or discounted alcohol was associated with increased levels of harmful drinking.

(Siegfried 2014; Brown 2016)

Marketing & Policy Options - 3

- There is a link between brand specific alcohol advertising and consumption patterns among underage drinkers. **Receiving free alcohol is linked to 40% greater odds of reporting drinking to intoxication**
- Responsibility Deal alcohol pledges: the responsibility messages appear to be ambiguous and industry campaigns can promote drinking instead of dissuading consumption. **The most effective evidence-based strategies to reduce alcohol related harm are not reflected consistently in the responsibility deal campaigns.**

(Esser & Jernigan 2018; Knai et al 2018)

Implications & Recommendations - 1

- **Marketing codes fail to protect minors**, and this particularly important with digital marketing techniques that encourage interactive engagement with brand marketing and are difficult for parents to monitor and control.
- There need to be **restrictions on youth exposure to free sampling of alcohol or owning alcohol-related merchandise.**
- Governments should implement **digital alcohol marketing regulations** under the precautionary principle, as the alcohol industry's self-regulated marketing codes are likely ineffective at protecting populations vulnerable to alcohol-related harm.

Implications - 2

- The process of determining the validity of complaints employed by most industry groups appears to suffer from serious conflict of interest and procedural weaknesses that could compromise objective adjudication of even well-documented complaints. **The current system of self-regulation needs major modifications** if it is to serve public health objectives, and more systematic evaluations of the complaint process are needed.
- Monitoring of alcohol marketing practices should be the **responsibility of an independent body or a government agency**, and it should be performed systematically and routinely.
- Government agencies, that are independent from the industry, should **restrict alcohol marketing exposures in the adolescent population**.

Implications - 3

- Stronger guidelines should be developed to eliminate loopholes
- Enhanced enforcement of advertising codes can occur through a **pre-clearance mechanism, where a panel of health professionals and representatives of vulnerable populations** would review all communications using reliable content rating procedures to identify code violations before advertisement dissemination.
- Input from the general public, and especially vulnerable groups such as young people, should be included in evaluating advertisements.
- The roles of NGOs, hospitals, and charities in alcohol marketing should be documented and exposed.
- Future research should examine the impact of alcohol marketing on various populations and groups, **including women and girls, those dependent on alcohol and in recovery.**

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