



News and Trends

Research Shows Underage Drinkers Consume Specific Brands

News from the first national survey examining alcohol preferences among underage drinkers

A relatively small number of alcohol brands dominate underage youth alcohol consumption, according to a new report from researchers at the Boston University School of Public Health and the Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth (CAMY) at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. The top 25 brands accounted for nearly half of youth alcohol consumption. In contrast, adult consumption is nearly twice as widely spread among different brands.

According to researchers, the study paves the way for subsequent studies to explore the association between exposure to alcohol advertising/marketing and drinking behavior in young people. Of the top 25 consumed brands, 12 were spirits brands (including four vodkas), nine were beers, and four were flavored alcohol beverages. According to the study, the top 10 brands consumed by underage drinkers include:

1. Bud Light, 27.9%
2. Smirnoff Malt Beverages, 17.0%
3. Budweiser, 14.6%
4. Smirnoff Vodkas, 12.7%
5. Coors Light, 12.7%
6. Jack Daniel's Bourbons, 11.4%
7. Corona Extra, 11.3%
8. Mike's, 10.8%
9. Captain Morgan Rums, 10.4%
10. Absolut Vodkas, 10.1%

Alcohol is responsible for 4,700 deaths per year among young people under the age of 21. More than 70 percent of high school students have consumed alcohol, and approximately 22 percent engage in heavy episodic drinking (binge drinking). At least 14 studies have found that the more young people are exposed to alcohol advertising and marketing, the more likely they are to drink, or if they are already drinking, to drink more.

The researchers surveyed 1,032 youth, ages 13-20, via an Internet-based survey. Respondents were asked about their past 30-day consumption of 898 brands of alcohol among 16 alcoholic beverage types, including the frequency and amount of each brand consumed in the past 30 days.

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This research was supported by a grant from the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism. The Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth monitors the marketing practices of the alcohol industry to focus attention and action on industry practices that jeopardize the health and safety of America's youth. The Center was founded in 2002 at Georgetown University with funding from The Pew Charitable Trusts and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. The Center moved to the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health in 2008 and is currently funded by the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). For more information, visit www.camy.org.