

The effects of televised alcohol advertising on young people's drinking lifestyle

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Abstract

Television has strong influence on its audiences. Young people are frequently exposed to advertised alcohol while watching television programmes. This study explored the effects of televised alcohol advertisements on young people in South Africa to identify factors influencing alcohol consumption among them. In selecting the geographical areas for this study; cluster-sampling technique was used. About Thirty (30) participants were purposively selected for this qualitative study and subjected for semi-structured in-depth interviews for data collections. The collected data was analysed using Thematic Contents, which was done manually. This study revealed that televised alcohol advertising induce changes in young people's behaviour due to their persuasive nature, convincing messages, and inciting dramatic scenes employed in the advertisements. Its use of celebrities manipulates them into drinking alcohol which may lead to excessive drinking and crime participation. It also indicates a link between high alcohol consumption and the persistent high prevalence rate of Human Immunodeficiency Virus / Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome HIV/AIDS in South Africa. Their attitude towards alcohol is related to their beliefs about the effects of alcohol consumption. Other factors include peer pressure, socio-cultural background and family breakdown. Televised alcohol advertisement has an undue influence on young people's alcohol consumption, but that the extent of its effect on individuals differ due to some factors such as the manipulative nature of television alcohol advertisements, peer pressure, social media and celebrities, young people's curious and adventurous nature, easy lifestyle depicted in the advertisements, family breakdown, cultural background and family practices are strongly cited by this study. For recommendations; young people's choice of lifestyle can strengthen or weaken the effects of alcohol advertising on them. The National government, civil societies and private organisations need to develop initiatives to help young people overcome alcohol consumption

and its consequences. This government should increase the “sin” tax on alcohol beverages, introduce stricter regulatory measures for alcohol advertising, and curtail the allocation of licence for tavern business outlets.

Keywords: Alcohol, Alcohol advertising, Drinking lifestyle, Television effects, Young people.

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