

Youth exposure to alcohol ads in magazines declining

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Youth exposure to alcohol advertising in magazines declined by 48 percent between 2001 and 2008, according to a new study by the Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth (CAMY) at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health.

Although 325 [alcohol](#) brands advertised in magazines in 2008, just 16 brands accounted for half of the advertising placed in publications more likely to be seen per capita by youth than by adults. Leading the list were Patron Silver Tequila, Absolut Vodka, Kahlua Liqueurs, Ketel One Vodka and Jim Beam Bourbon Whiskey.

The report, which is available at www.camy.org, shows that alcohol companies have largely met the industry's voluntary standard of not placing ads in magazines with 30 percent or more youth readership. That standard was adopted in 2003.

However, this standard has had little effect on the percentage of youth exposure coming from advertising placed in youth-oriented publications. As of 2008, 78 percent of youth exposure to this advertising occurred in magazines that youth ages 12 to 20 were more likely to read than adults age 21 and above. A previous CAMY report, analyzing magazine advertising from 2001 to 2005 and published in CDC's Mortality and Morbidity Weekly Report, found that 80 percent of youth exposure came from ads placed in youth-oriented publications.

"It continues to make no sense to advertise more heavily to those who cannot purchase alcohol than to those who can," said CAMY Director David H. Jernigan. "Yet a relatively small number of brands are still doing this, despite industry efforts to tighten the standard in order to reduce youth exposure."

Researchers at CAMY and Virtual Media Resources analyzed 29,026 alcohol-product

advertisements in national magazines, using advertising-industry standard sources, including The Nielsen Company and GfK MRI, to count and measure exposure to alcohol advertisements in magazines. These ads were placed between 2001 and 2008 at a cost of \$2.7 billion. Other key findings of the report include:

- The number of ads placed by distilled spirits companies, the largest alcohol advertisers in magazines, fell by 34 percent from 2001 to 2008, while ads placed by brewers increased by 158 percent.
- As distillers moved their advertising out of magazines, overall alcohol advertising exposure declined for all age groups. Adult (age 21 and above) exposure declined by 29 percent and young adult exposure (age 21 to 34) fell by 31 percent.
- Youth exposure to distilled spirits ads in magazines fell by 62 percent, but exposure to beer ads in magazines rose by 57 percent during this period.
- Alcohol advertising placed in publications with under-21 audiences greater than 30 percent fell to almost
- However, the 30 percent standard affected placements in only nine of the 160 magazines in which alcohol companies placed their advertising between 2001 and 2008.

Alcohol is the leading drug problem among America's youth, and causes more than 4,600 deaths each year among people under 21, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Numerous long-term studies have found that the more young people are exposed to [alcohol advertising](#), the more likely they are to drink

or to drink more if they are already drinking.

In 2003, the National Research Council and Institute of Medicine recommended that alcohol companies change their audience thresholds to 15 percent based on the presence of 12- to 20 year-olds in the viewing, reading or listening audience. In 2006, 20 state attorneys general requested the U.S. Federal Trade Commission to explore this option with alcohol companies.

"Beer advertisers appear to be filling the gap left by distillers in youth-oriented magazines," said Jernigan. "If the entire industry is serious about underage drinking, it should adopt stricter standards to protect against youth exposure to its [advertising](#)."

Provided by Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg School of Public Health

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