

# African-American youth exposed to more alcohol advertising than youth in general

September 27 2012

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African-American youth ages 12-20 are seeing more advertisements for alcohol in magazines and on TV compared with all youth ages 12-20, according to a new report from the Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth (CAMY) at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. The report is available on CAMY's website, [www.camy.org](http://www.camy.org).

The report analyzes [alcohol exposure](#) by type and brand among African-American [youth](#) in comparison to all youth. It also assesses exposure of African-American youth to [alcohol advertising](#) relative to African-American adults across various media venues using the most recent year(s) of data available.

Alcohol is the most widely used drug among African-American youth, and is associated with violence, [motor vehicle crashes](#) and the spread of sexually transmitted diseases. 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 report's central finding—that African-American youth are being over-exposed to alcohol advertising—is a result of two key phenomena," said author David Jernigan, PhD, the director of CAMY. "First, brands are specifically targeting African-American audiences and, secondly, African-American media habits make them more vulnerable to alcohol advertising in general because of higher levels of [media consumption](#). As a result, there should be a commitment from alcohol marketers to cut

exposure to this high-risk population."

The report finds certain brands, channels and formats overexpose African-American youth to alcohol advertisements:

- **Magazines:** African-American youth saw 32 percent more alcohol advertising than all youth in national magazines during 2008. Five publications with high African-American youth readership generated at least twice as much exposure to African-American youth compared to all youth: Jet (440 percent more), Essence (435 percent more), Ebony (426 percent more), Black Enterprise (421 percent more), and Vibe (328 percent more). Five brands of alcohol overexposed African-American youth compared to all youth and to African-American adults: Seagram's Twisted Gin, Seagram's Extra Dry Gin, Jacques Cardin Cognac, 1800 Silver Tequila, and Hennessy Cognacs.
- **Television:** African-American youth were exposed to 17 percent more advertising per capita than all youth in 2009, including 20 percent more exposure to distilled spirits advertising. Several networks generated at least twice as much African-American youth exposure to alcohol advertising than all youth: TV One (453 percent more), BET (344 percent more), SoapNet (299 percent more), CNN (130 percent more) and TNT (122 percent more).
- **Radio:** African-American youth heard 26 percent less advertising in 2009 for alcohol than all youth on stations with the most advanced measurement data available; however, they heard 32 percent more radio advertising for distilled spirits. In these markets, four station formats delivered more alcohol advertising exposure to African-American youth than to African-American adults: Contemporary Hit/Rhythmic (104 percent more), Contemporary Hit/Pop (14 percent more), Urban (13 percent

more) and Hot Adult Contemporary (43 percent more).

"Alcohol products and imagery continue to pervade African-American youth culture, despite the well known negative health consequences," said Denise Herd, PhD, an associate professor with the University of California Berkeley School of Public Health who reviewed the report. "The findings of this report make clear immediate action is needed to protect the health and well-being of young African Americans."

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Youth Risk Behavior Survey, about one in three African-American high school students in the U.S. are current drinkers, and about 40 percent of those who drink report binge drinking. While alcohol use and binge drinking tend to be less common among African-American adults than among other racial and ethnic groups, African-American adults who binge drink tend to do so more frequently and with higher intensity than non-African Americans.

In 2003, trade groups for beer and distilled spirits committed to placing alcohol ads in media venues only when underage youth comprise 30 percent of the audience or less. Since that time, a number of groups and officials, including the National Research Council, the Institute of Medicine and 24 state attorneys general, have called upon the alcohol industry to strengthen its standard and meet a "proportional" 15 percent placement standard, given that the group most at risk for underage drinking—12 to 20 year-olds—is less than 15 percent of the U.S. population.

Provided by Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg School of Public Health

Citation: African-American youth exposed to more alcohol advertising than youth in general

(2012, September 27) retrieved 28 January 2023 from  
<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2012-09-african-american-youth-exposed-alcohol-advertising.html>

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