

AFL, NRL, and cricket promoting alcohol to children

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With two footy finals series set to begin in earnest next week, new research from Monash University shows that Australian children and adolescents receive millions of exposures to alcohol advertising when watching AFL, NRL, and Cricket on TV, with 47 per cent of the exposures occurring during children's daytime viewing.

Published this week in the journal *Drug and Alcohol Review* the study found that there were 3544 alcohol adverts in free-to-air AFL, NRL, and Cricket, representing 60 per cent of all [alcohol advertising](#) in sport TV. The AFL had the most alcohol adverts (1942) throughout the year, followed by Cricket (941) and the NRL (661), with children's exposure to alcohol advertising greatest when watching AFL.

The research follows a report published in the international journal PLOS ONE in August that found that 87 per cent of all alcohol adverts on Australian free-to-air TV during the daytime were in sports. The latest study went further by cross-matching TV audience viewing and alcohol advertising data for all AFL, NRL and Cricket TV in 2012. The three sports had a cumulative viewing audience of 27 million children and adolescents (0-17 years) in 2012, and child and adolescent audiences received 51 million exposures to alcohol advertising across the year. While nearly half of children and adolescents exposure to alcohol advertising was before 8.30pm, children's exposure was most intensive between 8.30 and 9.30pm.

"The study considerably underestimates children's true exposure to alcohol advertising when watching sport, because the data we report here do not include alcohol advertising on players uniforms, stadium signage, or on the playing surface, and was restricted to live sports," study lead Associate Professor Kerry O'Brien said.

The study was funded by the Australian Research

Council, Australian National Preventative Health Agency, and VicHealth, and shows that proposed changes to the Commercial Television Industry Code of Practice that would see a loosening of alcohol advertising regulations, could result in a doubling of children's exposure to alcohol advertising in sport TV. International research shows that children's exposure to alcohol advertising is associated to earlier drinking and more problematic alcohol consumption in later life.

"What was striking was the extent of children's exposure because of the clause allowing alcohol advertising in daytime sport. It's banned in every other TV genre because it's known to be harmful to children, so why is sport exempt? It just doesn't make sense," study lead-author Dr Sherilene Carr said.

"The [alcohol industry](#)'s job is to increase sales and consumption of alcohol, so they can't be expected to protect young people's health, but the AFL, NRL, and Cricket, could care more than they apparently do. I think parents have had enough of the gambling, fast food, and alcohol advertising in sport. Surely sport is important and popular enough to the nation to be able to attract other sponsors and advertisers," Associate Professor O'Brien said.

Along with other recent reports, the study suggests that removing a clause in current regulations that allows alcohol advertising during the daytime in sport, and preventing alcohol advertising before 9.30pm, could halve [children](#) and adolescents exposure to alcohol advertising.

More information: Carr, S., O'Brien, K.S. et al. Child and adolescent exposure to alcohol advertising in Australia's major televised sports. *Drug and Alcohol Review*. onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/dar.12326/abstract

Provided by Monash University

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