

STAP

STICHTING
ALCOHOLPREVENTIE



Effective Alcohol Marketing Regulations

A proposed framework to evaluate existing alcohol marketing regulations

By Avalon de Bruijn

(STAP: Dutch Institute for Alcohol Policy)

Aim of the study

- Hardly any scientific study that tested the effectiveness of alcohol marketing regulations was found in the ELSA project (2007)
- No integrated theoretical framework to evaluate the effectiveness of existing alcohol marketing regulations was found (ELSA, 2007).
- We will provide a framework to evaluate alcohol marketing policy interventions.
- Point of departure: The expected influence on drinking behaviour of children and adolescents is.

Method:

- Literature study
- In PubMed, Medline, PsychINFO, and Google Scholar / “snowball” technique / grey literature from governmental organizations, NGOs and alcohol industry
- No peer reviewed studies were found that analyse the effectiveness of alcohol marketing in a systematic way.
- About 150 relevant articles were found (more than half were scientific papers)
- Most articles mention regulations
- Mostly, authors in the paper speculate on the effectiveness of the regulation and do not test this directly.
- Arguments mentioned in the papers were categorized on the basis of their intervention (e.g. type of volume restriction) and described in this report. Agreement or disagreement among authors on the effectiveness of different interventions are described in the report.

Method Year 2:

- Survey under NGOs and governmental organizations (to evaluate existing regulations in Europe)
- Interviews with stakeholders (to examine a selection of case studies)



Results (1)

Content regulations can protect all consumers against misleading or deceptive alcohol advertisements and young people against attractive advertisements. To protect young people effectively against attractive advertisements, content restrictions should fulfil the following criteria:

1. Content restrictions should address all elements that have shown to be appealing to young people (e.g. lifestyle images, humour).
2. Content restrictions should limit advertisements that young people find appealing even if these are not specifically targeting minors or are specifically appealing to minors (but to adults as well).
3. Alcohol advertisements should be evaluated according to young people's interpretation and not according to the intention of the advertiser.

Results (2)

However, content restrictions do not account for the cumulative effects of marketing campaigns that often reach consumers by several sources.

Effective volume restrictions should fulfil the following criteria:

1. the bans proposed are not merely symbolic policies but contribute substantially to the total volume of alcohol advertising to which adolescents are exposed;
2. no significant substitution effects arise.

Results (3)

The effectiveness of alcohol marketing regulations depends not solely on these content and/or volume restrictions, but also on the system that supports them. 14 elements were identified that need to be fulfilled to support the volume and/or content restriction successfully.

Policy Recommendations (1):

- Content restrictions should limit all alcohol advertisements that include any element that are appealing to youngsters even if the advertisement is not specifically targeting youngsters.

Allowing alcohol advertisements with only product information is an example of a content restriction that is clear to all observers and prohibits any association of the alcoholic beverage with other images.

Policy Recommendations (2):

- To account for large exposure to alcohol marketing practices or cumulative effects of alcohol marketing campaigns, volume restrictions are necessary.
- These volume restrictions should substantially decrease young people's exposure to alcohol marketing and possible negative substitution or side effects should be monitored and regulated if necessary.

Policy Recommendations (3):

- Volume and content restrictions will only be effective if there is a regulation system that supports the restriction and stimulates the adherence to the regulation.
- A transparent system with an independent adjudication process and effective sanctioning are some of the elements that needs that be accounted for.