

Alcohol Ads Causing Children to Drink, Study Says

Children are enticed into underage drinking by alcohol advertisements on television and social media, research suggests.

A U.S. study in the *Journal of Studies on Alcohol and Drugs* found that children were often exposed to alcohol advertisements on apps and during television programs.

Evidence showed that for each additional hour of television viewed by children per day, the risk of starting to drink increased by 9%. For films the figure was even higher, at 15%.

Smoking

Authors Michael Weitzman and Lily Lee drew comparisons to teenage smoking, where tobacco ads were regulated in the U.S. when it was concluded they caused children to smoke.

Weitzman said: "Advertising changes teens' attitudes about alcohol and can cause them to start drinking. Just as tobacco advertising causes teen smoking, exposure to alcohol ads causes teens to drink.

"The young are particularly vulnerable due to their potential for forming brand loyalties, limited scepticism and high use of social media—where alcohol marketing is increasingly found."

The researchers called for alcohol ads on television and social media to be regulated in a similar way to tobacco.

Television

Previous U.K. research found that almost half of all alcohol ads appeared in peak viewing time on the most popular

television channels and before the watershed.

NHS Digital figures suggest that 10% of eleven to 16-year-olds in England have consumed alcohol in the past week, and nearly a quarter of 15-year-olds said they had recently been drunk.

The Scottish Government is currently considering banning alcohol ads on television before the 9 p.m. watershed.

This article originally appeared at the Christian Institute.