ALCOHOL IN SUMMER TELEVISION SHOWS AND COMMERCIALS

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Background

• Alaska ranks in the top 10% of all states in quantity per capita of alcohol sales.
• Alaskans ages 16 to 25 years were injured in alcohol-related motor vehicle accidents more than twice the national average.
• In Anchorage, alcohol was a major factor in almost half of all homicides and in more than half of all sexual abuse and family violence cases.

Methods

• Sampling: The study sample consists of approximately 81 television shows and 2,454 commercials and shows, an individual average of 8.1 alcohol events per hour of television in major television networks.

• Time Segments: Three time segments were considered in this study. 12pm to 6pm was considered daytime, 6pm to 10pm was considered prime time, and 10pm to 12am was considered as late fringe.

• Coding: Student researchers trained in television content analysis reviewed the television shows and commercials, and recorded whether there were alcohol event(s). Then, they noted the features of the show and commercials with alcohol events.

• Alcohol Definition: An alcohol event can be explicit or implicit. The setting where the alcohol event is taking place defines an alcohol event/activity. As long as the setting is stationary, so is the alcohol event.

• Inter-rater Reliability: To investigate the variability and reliability of the research assistants’ coding of alcohol events, inter-rater reliability testing was carried out. The lead investigator assigned each research assistant a randomly sampled television network, divided into two-hour segments to review, and then later compared their responses.

Results

Study Sample

• A total of 81 shows were reviewed, of which 5% were incompletely recorded.

• There were a total of 2,454 commercials. Only two commercials were labeled incomplete by the reviewers.

Alcohol Issues as a Theme for the Television Show

• Approximately 10 of the 81 shows reviewed had themes pertaining to alcohol issues.

• Five of the shows had alcohol themes portraying the negative consequences of alcohol, such as being in trouble with the law and even death.

• The other five shows with alcohol themes portrayed alcohol use in a positive light.

Conclusion

- The study gives evidence that alcohol events are prevalent in the television media.

- Due to the presence of alcohol events in shows and commercials and shows with alcohol events. Alternatively, educating youth of the media’s manipulative presentation of alcohol may help them to be resilient to media’s positive alcohol portrayal.

Recommendation

In order to combat this problem in our media, policy can be set wherein shows, public service announcements, and/or advertisements regarding alcohol prevention receive equal exposure as commercials and shows with alcohol events. Alternatively, educating youth of the media’s manipulative presentation of alcohol may help them to be resilient to media’s positive alcohol portrayal.

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Prime-Time Television.”


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Healthy Alaskans 2010, Volume I: Targets and Strategies

Appendix A: Questions for Parents

Appendix B: Questions for Students

Appendix C: Questions for Teachers

Appendix D: Questions for Community Health Workers who made valuable comments and suggestions in the research process.