

News Release

For Immediate Release

April 2, 2003

Contact:

info@camy.org

Radio Daze: Alcohol Ads Tune in Underage Youth

New Study Shows Underage Youth Hear More Radio Ads for Beer and Spirits than Adults

Washington, DC - America's youth heard more beer and distilled spirits commercials on the radio in 2001 and 2002 than did people of legal drinking age, according to [a report released today](#) by the Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth at Georgetown University. Wine advertisers, on the other hand, exposed youth to significantly less radio advertising than adults.

"Youth under 21 top the charts when it comes to exposure to alcohol advertising," said the Center's executive director Jim O'Hara. "The fact that kids under 21 hear more beer and distilled spirits ads than people 21 and older should concern everyone who cares about our children."

The Center's study found that the alcohol industry routinely overexposed youth to its radio advertising by placing product ads when and where youth were more likely to hear them.

Key findings include:

Youth heard more radio ads for beer, "malternatives" and distilled spirits. Underage youth, ages 12-20, heard 8% more beer and ale advertising and 12% more malternative advertising than adults 21 and older. The exposure was even greater for the distilled spirits category, where youth heard 14% more advertising.

Youth heard substantially less radio advertising for wine. Ads for wine were overwhelmingly more effectively delivered to adults than to youth, showing how advertisers can target an adult audience without overexposing youth.

Alcohol ads were placed on stations with "youth" formats. Seventy-three percent of the alcohol radio advertising in terms of gross ratings points was on four formats - Rhythmic Contemporary Hit, Pop Contemporary Hit, Urban Contemporary and Alternative - that routinely have a disproportionately large listening audience of 12- to 20- year-olds.

Youth in African-American and Hispanic communities were overexposed to radio alcohol advertising. These findings were also seen in the African-American and Hispanic radio audiences. For instance, Hispanic youth heard 34% more beer and ale advertising on radio than

Hispanic adults, and as much beer and ale advertising on radio was delivered to African-American youth as to African-American adults.

"What our study shows is that if you are under 21 you are a target for the alcohol industry's radio ads," O'Hara added. "In fact, 20 of the 160 brands delivered more radio advertising to underage youth than to young adults ages 21-34, an age group the alcohol industry routinely describes as its target audience."

Over the course of a week, the average teenager listens to 13.5 hours of radio. By comparison, he or she spends 10.6 hours per week watching television, 7.6 hours online, and 3.3 hours reading magazines for pleasure. For advertisers, radio offers targeted selection of an audience, because station formats appeal to narrow demographics.

Background on the Report

The Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth commissioned Virtual Media Resources (VMR) to audit alcohol radio advertising in 2001 and 2002 and to conduct a case study of alcohol radio advertising in December 2002 and January 2003 to validate the audit findings.

The Center's study analyzed a major market sample, drawn by Media Monitors (MMI), of alcohol radio ads in 2001 and 2002 that tracked the actual placement of 87,094 ads in 19 leading markets across the nation and integrated these data with audience information from Arbitron to assess who listened to what and when. In addition, VMR then conducted an in-depth analysis of 11,712 ad placements for five alcohol brands in 63 markets from December 15, 2002 to January 31, 2003. This case study confirmed and amplified the findings from the nationwide sample.

This report on radio advertising practices is the fourth study by the Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth on the marketing tactics of the alcohol industry. The Center's previous studies on television, magazine and responsibility ads also showed clear overexposure of alcohol product ads to under-21 youth audiences.

[Press Materials](#)

###