

# The American Issue

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## Big Alcohol Takes Aim at Young People

By William H. Perkins, Jr.

Media watchers have complained for years about the alcohol industry's blatant campaign to market their products to children. Many of these media watchers have no particular religious affiliation; they just want what's best for the nation's children. From all indications, that's not what the alcohol industry wants.

The Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth (CAMY) at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C., has just released the explosive results of yet another study that proves beyond a doubt what the alcohol industry is up to.

The study, titled Youth Exposure to Alcohol Advertising on Radio, 2006, analyzed 337,602 alcohol product advertisements in 28 of the largest radio markets in the U.S. in 2006. The key findings:

- In 2006, more than a third of advertising placements for alcohol products in 28 of the largest radio markets (120,299 or 35.6%) were on programming that youth, ages 12-20, were more likely to hear on a per capita basis than adults.
- Advertisements on programming that youth were more likely to hear than adults accounted for more than half (58%) of youth exposure to alcohol advertising on the radio.
- Approximately one in twelve alcohol advertisements (27,682 or eight percent) were on programming with youth audience compositions greater than the alcohol industry's voluntary maximum of 30%, and 18 out of 143 brands placed 20% or more of their advertisements above that threshold.

Twenty-six brands placed more than half of their advertisements on programming that youth were more likely to hear on a per capita basis than adults.

The alcohol pushers know what they are doing. "Despite competition from iPods, instant messaging, and the Internet, radio remains a popular medium among youth," the study reports. "Ninety-one percent of teens listen to the radio weekly, while 65.5% listen to it every day. Comparing genders, 87.9% of males ages 12-17 are radio listeners, listening to an average of 11 hours and five minutes per week while 94% of females in this age group are tuned in, listening an average 14 hours per week."

One need not be a marketing executive to understand the gravity of those numbers. In the all-important youth demographic, it's a dream come true for the alcohol industry which, like the tobacco companies, must recruit new users to replace those who die from the effects of a lifetime of physical debasement from using their products.

"Although communities across the nation have made significant efforts to reduce youth access to alcohol, underage drinking remains a widespread and tragic public health problem," CAMY reports. By their senior year in high school, 45% of young people report drinking within the past 30 days, and 25% reported binge drinking of five or more drinks in a row within the past two weeks, CAMY states.

Anheuser-Busch, Inc., of St. Louis, one of the largest pushers of alcoholic misery in the country, predictably dismissed the study in a statement quoted by Associated Press. "Preventing underage drinking is about preventing youth access to alcohol, not about what a teen does or doesn't hear on the radio," said company Vice-President Carol Clark.

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Now, how's that for intellectual dishonesty? Clark says teens don't drink because of what they hear on the radio, while her company is a large and influential part of an industry that inarguably aims its radio advertising squarely at young people.

Well, which is it? They seem to want it both ways — but what they really want is our children. Will yours be next? Think about it.

This article is reprinted from the September 27, 2007, issue of *The Baptist Record*, the newspaper of the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

## Parental Drinking Boosts Teen Alcohol Risks

Monday, February 4, 2008; 12:00 AM

MONDAY, Feb. 4 (HealthDay News) -- Parents' drinking directly influences teen drinking and also has an indirect effect through teen perceptions of parenting, especially monitoring and disciplines, a new study says.

Reporting in the February issue of the Journal Alcoholism: Clinical & Experimental Research, researchers analyzed data collected from 2,402 male and 2,329 female teens and their parents in Finland. The teens were asked about their alcohol use and intoxication at ages 14 and 17.5, while the parents were asked about frequency of alcohol use and intoxication, as well as their lifetime prevalence of alcohol-related problems.

"We wanted to, first, examine the extent of the relationship between the drinking behaviors of parents and those of their adolescent offspring at 14 and 17.5 years of age," corresponding author Shawn J. Latendresse, a postdoctoral research fellow at the Virginia Institute for Psychiatric and Behavioral Genetics at Virginia Commonwealth University, said in a prepared statement.

"Second, we wanted to determine how much of that association was due to parents' drinking behaviors affecting their ability to parent responsibly, which translated into a risky or protective environment," Latendresse said.

The study found that, among parental dimensions examined, monitoring and discipline played the strongest intermediary role in associations between parental and adolescent drinking behaviors. The researchers also found that the magnitude of this role was much stronger during early adolescence, while parental drinking had a stronger effect on teen drinking in later adolescence.

"With respect to individual aspects of parenting, our analyses show that parental alcohol use, intoxication, and problem drinking symptoms are consistently associated with decreases in monitoring and increases in discipline," Latendresse said.

"Decreases in monitoring are related to higher levels of adolescent alcohol use at age 14 and more frequent intoxication at both 14 and 17.5. Likewise, increases in discipline are linked to more frequent use and intoxication but only when adolescents are 17.5," Latendresse said.

While the study findings "are consistent with the protective effects of parental monitoring, it is important to note that excessive discipline may actually have the unintended effect of conveying greater risk for alcohol-related behaviors among adolescents as they get older and are seeking a greater sense of autonomy," the statement said.

SOURCE:Alcoholism: Clinical & Experimental Research, news release, Feb. 3, 2008

## **Eyes Can Reveal FASD in Children**

February 6, 2008

### **Research Summary**

Fetal-alcohol spectrum disorders (FASD) can be identified using an eye-blink test when children have been exposed to alcohol in the womb but don't exhibit the classic facial malformations associated with FASD, HealthDay News reported Feb. 4.

Eyeblink conditioning (EBC) pairs stimuli like sound and air puffs to measure reaction time and brain functioning. Researchers administered EBC to 98 five-year-olds and found that EBC deficits were linked to fetal alcohol exposure.

"Animal studies have shown that binge consumption of alcohol during pregnancy impairs EBC," said researcher Sandra W. Jacobson of Wayne State University's School of Medicine. "Our results show that there was a dose-response relation between alcohol exposure and FASD diagnosis and that a fundamental element of learning is affected by prenatal alcohol exposure."

"This study clearly links one brain area to the learning deficits experienced by FAS children, whether or not they have physical manifestations of the condition, and thus can provide a basis for the development of remediation programs," added Lynn T. Singer of Case Western Reserve University.

"Second, since normal human infants reach functional capacity on the EBC response by five months of age, and since the EBC deficit appears to be so sensitive, infants at risk can be identified early in life, and intervention programs can begin when the plasticity of the brain is greatest and has the strongest effect."

The findings were published in the February 2008 issue of the journal *Alcoholism: Clinical & Experimental Research*.

<http://www.jointogether.org/news/research/summaries/2008/eyes-can-reveal-fas-in.html>

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### **April is Alcohol Awareness Month**

<http://ncadi.samhsa.gov/seasonal/aprilalcohol/>

When many people think of alcohol abusers, they picture teenagers sneaking drinks before high school football games or at unsupervised parties. However, alcohol abuse is prevalent within many demographic groups in the United States. People who abuse alcohol can be:

- College students who binge drink at local bars.
- Pregnant women who drink and put their babies at risk for fetal alcohol syndrome.
- Professionals who drink after a long day of work.
- Senior citizens who drink out of loneliness.

In 2003, almost 23 percent (54 million) of Americans participated in binge drinking within 30 days prior to taking SAMHSA's National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH). That same year, approximately 21.6 million adults abused alcohol or were alcohol dependent.

To recognize the serious problem of alcohol abuse, April is designated "Alcohol Awareness Month." April 8 marks the annual observance of National Alcohol Screening Day (NASD). At locations across the United States, people can be screened—anonously—to see if their drinking habits may be risky.

Participants who come into a screening site on April 8 will have the opportunity to view an educational presentation and pick up educational materials, such as a questionnaire that screens for risky drinking and dependence. People can also meet one-on-one with a health professional to discuss any concerns. The screenings are free and anonymous.

Last year, more than 203,000 people participated in NASD activities at more than 5,400 screening sites nationwide—the largest NASD yet! If you suspect that you might have a drinking problem, or you know someone who abuses alcohol, please contact SAMHSA's National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information (NCADI) at 1-800-729-6686 or find a screening site located near you.

**American Council on Alcohol Problems**  
 2376 Lakeside Drive  
 Birmingham, AL 35244  
 205-989-8177 / dliacap2@bellsouth.net

**PURPOSE:** American Council on Alcohol Problems is the channel of cooperation through which state temperance organizations, national religious bodies and similar concerned groups and individuals in America can unite to deal with the problems caused by alcohol and other drugs.

ACAP provides the forum and the mechanism through which concerned persons can find common ground on alcohol and other drug problems and address these issues with a united voice. It is the successor organization to the American Temperance League and the Anti-Saloon League established in 1895. Membership of ACAP presently is made up of 30 local temperance organizations, 22 national Christian denominations, and other fraternal organizations that support ACAP's philosophy of abstinence.

(ACAP is classified by the IRS as a 501 (c)(3) tax-deductible charity.)

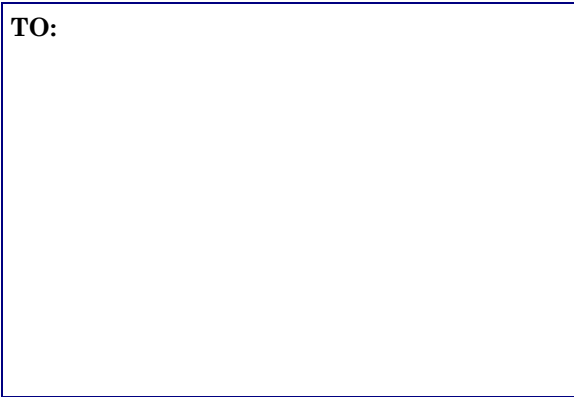
Checks should be made payable to:

**American Council on Alcohol Problems**

Mail to:

2376 Lakeside Drive, Birmingham, AL 35244

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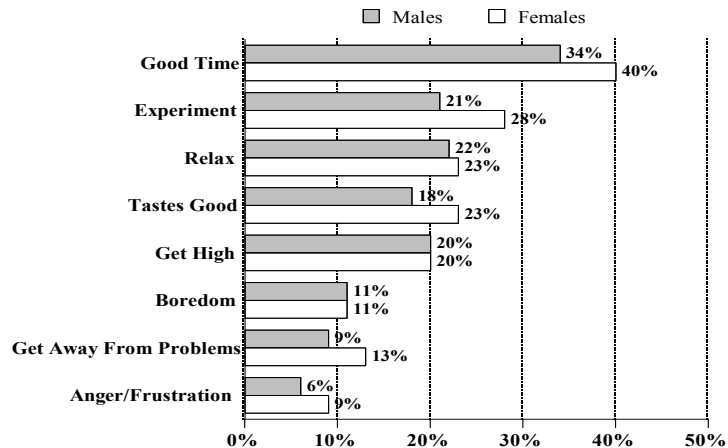
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**Study Finds Distinctly Different Drinking Motivations Among U.S. 12th Graders Suggests Motivation-Based Interventions Could Be Effective / CESAR FAX / [www.cesar.umd.edu](http://www.cesar.umd.edu)**

High school seniors have distinctly different reasons for drinking, according to an analysis of data from the 2004 Monitoring the Future survey. The most common reason for drinking cited by both male and female 12th graders was to have a good time, followed by to experiment and to relax (see figure below). A statistical analysis\* of these motivations resulted in four profiles of drinking motivations: 1) experimenters; 2) thrill-seekers (drink to have a good time and to get high); 3) relaxers; and 4) multi-reasoners (drink for a combination of escape and pleasure-seeking motivations). Youths with the lowest levels of risky drinking behaviors were more likely to be classified as experimenters while those with the highest levels of such behaviors were more likely to be classified as multi-reasoners (data not shown). The authors conclude that “targeted interventions that tailor program content to the distinct drinking motivation profiles...may prove to be effective in reducing risky drinking behavior among high school seniors” (p. 241).

**“What Have Been the Most Important Reasons for Your Drinking Alcoholic Beverages?”**

(N=1,877 U.S. 12<sup>th</sup> graders who reported drinking alcohol at least once in the past year)



SOURCE: Adapted by CESAR from Coffman, D.L., Patrick, M.E., Palen, L.A., Rhoades, B.L., and Ventura, A.K. “Why Do High School Seniors Drink? Implications for a Targeted Approach to Intervention,” *Prevention Science* 8 (4):241-248. For more information, contact Donna Coffman at [dlc30@psu.edu](mailto:dlc30@psu.edu).