

African American Youth and Alcohol Exposure

Written by Robert ID2724

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Advertising on radio, television and magazines of alcohol has exposed and reached more African-American youth than their peers in 2003 and 2004 on a per capita basis, according to a report released by the Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth (CAMY) at Georgetown University.

During this same period, overall youth exposure to alcohol advertising in magazines and on radio has declined, but this report finds that African-American youth continue to be exposed at higher levels than their peers.

Alcohol use is closely tied to the three leading causes of death among African-American youth ages 12 to 20: unintentional injuries (including motor vehicle crashes), homicides, and suicides.

In 2003, the Center released the first-ever comprehensive review of the exposure of African-American youth to alcohol advertising. The current report, titled *Exposure of African-American Youth to Alcohol Advertising, 2003-2004*, updates that study and shows a continuation of high exposure rates for African-American youth in magazines, radio and television programs.

Key findings from the report include:

-- African-American youth ages 12 to 20 were exposed to over 30 percent more magazine advertising per capita for alcohol than youth in general in 2003 and 2004, although overall youth exposure to alcohol advertising in magazines was declining during these years.

-- African-American youth heard more radio advertising per capita than youth in general for alcohol in nine of the ten largest radio markets in 2003, and six of the top ten markets -- New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Dallas-Fort Worth, Houston-Galveston, and Detroit -- in 2004.

-- Alcohol advertisers put ads on all of the 15 television programs most popular among African-American youth in 2003 and in 2004. These programs included *Girlfriends*, *Half & Half*,

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CSI and Without a Trace.

"As long as alcohol use plays a part in the leading causes of death for African-American youth, parents and policy makers have reason to be gravely concerned about the barrage of alcohol advertising reaching their children," said David Jernigan, executive director of CAMY.

Alcohol is the drug most commonly used by both African-American youth and adults. Alcohol products and imagery pervade African- American youth culture. Several recent long-term studies funded by the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism have documented a link between youth exposure to alcohol advertising and youth alcohol consumption.

In 2003, alcohol industry trade associations agreed to voluntary guidelines for their members that limited advertising in measured media to places where the youth audience is 30 percent or less. However, since youth ages 12 to 20 make up approximately 15 percent of the U.S. population ages 12 and older, the 30 percent industry threshold permits youth to be exposed to alcohol advertising at a rate that is double their share of the population.

Also in 2003, the National Research Council and the Institute of Medicine recommended that the alcohol industry move toward a 15 percent threshold. In May 2006, 20 state attorneys general expressed their support for a 15 percent standard in comments sent to the Federal Trade Commission. To date, no alcohol company has agreed to move below the current 30 percent standard.

"Ongoing, independent monitoring and reporting of youth exposure shows that African-American youth are still being overexposed compared to other youth," said Jernigan. "This kind of monitoring is critical to let African-American parents know the risks they face in raising their children."

About the Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth

The Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth at Georgetown University monitors the marketing practices of the alcohol industry to focus attention and action on industry practices that

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jeopardize the health and safety of America's youth. The Center is supported by grants from The Pew Charitable Trusts and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. More information on the Center and a full text of this report can be found at <http://www.camy.org>