

Assessment of Self-Regulatory Code Violations in Brazilian Television Beer Advertisements

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ABSTRACT

OBJECTIVE. Research suggests that alcoholic beverage advertisements may have an adverse effect on teenagers and young adults, owing to their vulnerability and the suggestive message content. This study was designed to evaluate perceived violations of the content guidelines of the Brazilian alcohol marketing self-regulation code, based on ratings of the five most popular beer advertisements broadcast on television in the summer of 2005/2006 and during the 2006 FIFA World Cup games.

METHODS. Five beer advertisements were selected from a previous study showing that they were perceived to be highly appealing to a sample of Brazilian teenagers. These ads were rated by sample of Brazilian secondary students using a rating procedure designed to measure the content of alcohol advertisements covered in industry self-regulation codes.

RESULTS. All five advertisements were found to violate multiple guidelines of the Brazilian code of marketing self-regulation. The ad with the greatest number of violations was Antarctica's "Male repellent", which was rated as violating 11 of the 16 guidelines in the code. Two ads had 9 violations and one had 8. The guidelines most likely to be violated by these ads were Guideline 1, which is aimed at protection of children and teenagers, and Guideline 2, which prohibits content encouraging excessive and irresponsible alcoholic beverage consumption.

CONCLUSIONS. The five beer advertisements rated as most appealing to Brazilian teenagers were perceived by a sample of the same population to have violated numerous principles of the Brazilian self-regulation code governing the marketing of alcoholic beverages. To the extent that these ads were perceived to have numerous code violations, it now seems important for regulatory authorities to submit industry marketing content to more systematic evaluation by young people and experts, and for researchers to focus more on the ways in which alcohol advertising influences early onset of drinking and excessive alcohol consumption.

KEY WORDS: Alcohol advertising, adolescents and alcohol, public health, Brazil, self-regulation