

The controversial topic of alcohol advertisement



Do you know today the death number due to alcohol consumption in United Kingdom is 33, 000 every year!(drinkaware. co. uk)And most of the blame goes to Alcohol advertisement, which has been always a controversial topic to discuss, some says it`s very much responsible for encouraging drinking and some says drinking is personal choice, but here it`s not the matter of does it encourage drinking or not, but is alcohol industry playing the role of being social responsible and following the ethics which people deserve to get? Alcohol advertisement has wipe out half of the advertisement industry, because alcohol is culturally welcomed and is on the tip of the tastes for people which also has its bad impression due to irresponsible and excessive drinking which turns out to be social shock, and has created adverse health and social consequences, sometimes to be long or short period. But here the basic concern is youth, who are the prime victim of alcohol and this tendency of alcohol consumption is key problem of every country today, but is alcohol advertisement are to be blamed for not being socially responsible and ethical? Today UK is has more strict voluntary codes for alcohol advertisement so that the boundary can be set up. However even after the strict voluntary codes are regulated for alcohol advertisement; the marketing and advertisement is blamed for this social shock, or alcohol industry is playing the positivity in the field of social responsibility, it`s very much important to understand where is the problem? Can we blame alcohol advertisement to encourage drinking or it is influence of culture and personal choice people make.

With the use of qualitative and quantitative approach I have tried to reach the objective of my research. My research will discuss does alcohol

advertisement is responsible enough to follow voluntary codes formulated and proving themselves socially and ethically responsible? And another important blame needed to be sorted out, is alcohol advertisement the right criteria to blame for encouraging drinking? What general of UK opinion about the fact of encouragement of alcohol consumption through advertisement? And what experts think about the issue?

CHAPTER ONE:

INTRODUCTION:

What is alcohol advertisement? Does that really deserve an answer, because controversial topics like that do not need an introduction but discussion! They are never out of discussion. Today some facts about alcohol advertisement said by an expert that every year alcohol industry spends 600 to 800 million pounds on advertising and promoting its products, " professor Gerard Hastings OBE Director institute of social media"

When I heard alcohol advertisement! My first reaction towards it was " challenging" and soon I knew it was. The reason behind choosing a topic like this was practically exploring my knowledge in the field of marketing which will also allow myself to understand the real meaning of social responsibility and ethics, till now I have just read and heard them but I really doesn't know if they exist? This is the first time in my life I am doing something which I lead to anywhere and any direction and since the alcohol advertisement is the issue then it brings interest with it. UK does allow the alcohol advertisement with some limitation which are regulated in form of voluntary codes, where as in India the alcohol advertisement are totally restricted, and

this gave me chance to explore alcohol advertisement and have a close look. My supervisor was a real inspiration as she knew that this issue will enlarge my knowledge of marketing and also the responsibility and ethics it holds within itself.

Billions of pounds are fritter on alcohol advertisement but in response of billions how much effort is put socially and ethically? Alcohol advertisement is always controversial and debatable topic and so people do have right to understand and being part of something like alcohol which has always showed them trouble, does alcohol industry follows all the voluntary codes stated for alcohol advertisement, is alcohol industry paying enough attention to the social responsibility come with promoting alcohol or they are still into earning shares and profit. Some people say its alcohol behind encouragement of alcohol consumption and some think is personal decision but if we look the both point of view if alcohol advertisement are made according to the voluntary codes set up then still the encouragement of drinking will be blamed on advertisement. But today even after strict voluntary codes and regulation it seems to be high drinking rate. So whom to blame alcohol advertisements or culture and self desire of people? My research in this paper holds the two important questions which are really needed to be answered before things get out of our hands, firstly is alcohol advertisement socially and ethically responsible? And is alcohol advertisement right factor to blame for encouraging consumption of alcohol? UK has culture and beliefs which has high rate in alcohol consumption, the primary reasons behind alcohol is the effects which it gives; is increasing the high risk on health of people and giving birth to social problems like

abusing , accidents, sexual harassments. And the more importantly the youth whose roots are being habitat by alcohol; it could be underage drinking consumption or over dose of alcohol consumption. So my research will focus on alcohol advertisement, but with limited issues covered in. one reason behind alcohol advertisement is that its ingredient of marketing, and marketing creates want in people, it give birth to desire, which doesn't specified with one product but all and since here alcohol is the product which has most of the time negative impact. Despite the fact marketing has connects world together and showed the reality of every entity present on this earth but it has given variety of reason of being dishonest. " The function and practice of marketing has been criticised because it is claimed that it deliberately creates partial truths about products and services and exploits the fears and weaknesses of fellow human beings". Peter Drunker.

Who should be really blamed? No one knows but thousand of researchers, experts, medical organizations, social worker have worked hard enough to reach to a point, however everyone has different way to look at the issue. To understand this issue there thousand of research and survey taken place with money spend but no one still knows what else could be done to stop this destroying of the generation who could not understand the responsible drinking and keeping it ahead of every entity in their lives.

So with the limited reach I have conducted a research to know what these people actually think, about the alcohol advertisement and the impact it has on them and on the youth.

PROBLEMS:

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May be after lining down some facts, will help me better to make understand the depth of the problem we have and how eagerly needs a solution.

About 10 million people in England drink above the guidelines.

UK has one of the highest rates of binge drinking in Europe.

Up to 1 in 3 adult is at risk of liver disease due to alcohol consumption.

33, 000 deaths in UK due to alcohol. (sources: www.drinkaware.co.uk)

This is not the end but the start, these are just the symptoms and the problem is "ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION"; which is one of the major causes to encourage alcohol consumption. There are various factors involved in encouragement of alcohol is starts from marketing, sports sponsorships , TV advertisement, movies, brands to cultural trend of UK which does has thrown out the fear of affects due to alcohol, parental inspirational to children.

But if we look into more deep then alcohol marketing has more impact on alcohol consumption. So with bringing alcohol in light the two major issues which are taken care of is, Do alcohol advertisement following its social and ethical responsibilities by following the voluntary codes set up by United Kingdom? And the reason for which these restriction made on alcohol advertisement which is sending wrong message of encouraging alcohol advertisement does has any real story. Yes another problem is do alcohol advertisement encourage drinking?

If we look into what are past and present problem lightened by experts, Advertising standards authority an self regulator of advertising across all

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media in UK, there records says that last year they received over 26, 000 complaints which seemed to be complained due to breach the rules. As a result, nearly 2, 500 ads were changed or withdrawn in 2008, thanks to a range of effective sanctions at our disposal and the cooperation of advertisers who respect our decisions. And on other hand the British medical Association says" Alcohol consumption in the UK has increased rapidly in recent years, not just among young people, but across society. The population is drinking in increasingly harmful ways and the result is a range of avoidable medical, psychological and social harm, damaged lives and early deaths. As consumption has increased, the market for alcohol has grown substantially. This has been driven by vast promotional and marketing campaigns with the UK alcohol industry spending approximately £800m annually. (Source: BMA) there are thousands of problem which has been raised due to alcohol advertisement affects not only youth but people of UK too.

The National Institute of Clinical Excellence (Nice) has said the government should consider a complete ban on alcohol advertising in order to stop underage and binge drinking. (source: <http://www.brandrepublic.com/news/1007168/Government-advisers-support-ban-alcohol-ads/>) what I understand here is every advertisement is made to reach out the population and inform them about the product and sell it and earn profit, so can we really blame alcohol industry or UK government? It`s very much important the changing culture and trend which is adopted by our youth, by disrespecting their lives front of alcohol consumption.

To understand and find a solution to this issue I have taken a research through qualitative and quantitative approach, so that the criteria can be fulfilled which needed by the alcohol advertisement, with my point of view and participants view on the issue I have tried to put down the solution and the key areas needed to be focused on.

OBJECTIVE:

The main intention of this research paper is to understand the alcohol advertisement, and what are the disadvantages, it has carried out toward the society. How its own function to reach people and convey them the message behind the product, has become the drawback. To find the explanation of blame on alcohol advertisement, and to what extend alcohol advertisement can be blame for encouraging alcohol consumption. With self understanding of the research I have outline the project with discussions and proves, as secondary data provided by experts.

With the journey of finding the answers behind the controversies of alcohol advertisement

METHODOLOGY:

With several methods and technique any kind of research can be conducted but by keeping in the mind that the issue like alcohol advertisement is very subjective, I have taken the help of both the research methods, qualitative(observation) and quantitative (survey via questionnaire) and of course the with help of secondary data of experts. The reason behind choosing the observation is that it makes the research descriptive and

involves the researcher itself which help them to understand the need of the research, and what are the further requirement which will make the research successful. Another method which is survey, which is conducted to complete the research, is because of one main advantage that it has the scientific approach which allows creating and designing the structure of the desired result with flexibility.

Secondary data is something which is ready to use, and bring deep explanation to the research. The best advantage of secondary data is the time and cost effective verses primary data which need more expensive and time taking, and since I have gathered both primary and secondary data collection for the research paper. The basic reason to choose these methodologies, if we look into the first issue, does alcohol industry follows voluntary codes set up by UK government for alcohol advertisement? I have done observation and used secondary data to find the reason, as to find the answer to the question it was important to observe the advertisement broadcasting on television, public places, and to the places where a breach of code can be conducted. And use of secondary data was due to the journey which has been alcohol advertisement gone through; the changes which were made due to unsatisfied and controversy it has created. So this has given the observation of the experts and organization which have involved them in this research too.

And to find the answer of another issue is alcohol advertisement is to blame for encouraging drinking? This was more of psychological based issue which needed to be answered by the people of UK, though survey via questionnaire which is designed with flexible questions and with the space of opinion which

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can reflect their mentality of alcohol advertisement contribution in encouraging them to drink more, and again I have also taken help of secondary data which involves journals, articles, reports taken by experts.

So my methodology for the research paper is combination of primary and secondary data which involves qualitative and quantitative research with following methods like survey and observations.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

With giving out surveys to 100 people out of which 70 people responded about their opinion on alcohol advertisement, with the age group of 23 to 54 the survey was filled up and according to them it is on them alcohol advertisement do not encourage drinking in the society they think it's a personal choice, which they make! 90% of them are not aware of the alcohol advertisement voluntary codes, which are set up by UK government so basically it's simple they even don't know what is legally allowed in alcohol advertisement to be broadcasted. These were the findings of survey conducted in Cardiff city. This result of survey can be put down in two ways, first that the participants are not aware about the alcohol advertisement voluntary codes, which are set up for the society itself, for the protection from the misleading message alcohol advertisement were giving in the past. And another finding which is very much psychological based is not accepting the fact that alcohol advertisement do encourage drinking not in youth but in society too.

IS ALCOHOL INDUSTRY RESPONSIBLE?

What ASA wants to say?

The Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) is the UK's independent regulator of advertising across all media, including TV, internet, sales promotions and direct marketing. A recent survey conducted by ASA to ensure the alcohol advertisement are following alcohol advertising codes in 2008 - 2009 before December, during the period before Christmas the ASA`s compliance team supervised and assessed all the alcohol advertisements with all the content being used for promotion of alcohol across all the media from 1 to 24 December. The survey showed a very mush positive result, out of 307 alcohol advertisements which were monitored only one of them was contempt for breach of CAP code; and none of the advertisement breached BCAP codes. With overall conformity are of 99. 7% and reveal an improvement year to year over 2007 and 2008 survey which were conducted before by ASA in a row, which is compliance rate of 97. 4%(2007) and 98. 9% (2008) were verified.

The data projected by ASA shows

MEDIA

NO. of ads

NO. of breaches

Compliance rate of media

PRESS

177

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1

99.4%

OUTDOOR

33

0

100%

ONLINE

31

0

100%

TV

50

0

100%

RADIO

16

0

100%

(Source by ASA) 2008 - 2009

" According to ASA alcohol industry is the alcohol ads picked up in the survey sample between 1 December and 24 December 2009, 0.3% breached the CAP Code, a compliance rate of 99.7%. That is an encouraging result and suggests the industry is acting responsibly within the self-regulatory system. The result is an improvement on the compliance rate of 98.9% from the 2008 survey and 97.4% from the 2007 survey." ASA

But can we be relaxed after the data representations by ASA, if we really not need to be worried after this result then what expression, will one have after this well projected alcohol advertisement:

Is this answerable? Is responsibility reflecting?

In the recent discovery by expert Gerard Hasting, there were some producer who were found guilty in terms of neglecting voluntary codes setup for alcohol advertisement, he says as UK has chose for self regulatory control system which basically focuses on content of alcohol advertisement, and all this work is regulated by ASA, alcohol standard association and as the part of its alcohol inquiry, Gerard Hasting found evidences which proves that the communication agencies and producer were targeting youth, and promoting alcohol. With some marketing document in hand following producers were found guilty to be breach the codes for alcohol advertisement.

PRODUCER

BRAND

COMMUNICATION AGENCY

BEVERAGE BRANDS

WKD (AN ALCOPOP)

BIG COMMUNICATIONS

BIRAY LEINO PR

FIVE BY FIVE(DIGITAL)

DIAGEO

SMIRNOFF VODKA

AKQA

JWT

HALEWOOD INTERNATIONAL

LAMBRINI (A PERRY)

SIDEKICK SHOTS

BJL

CHEETHAMBELL JWT

MAOLSON COORS BREWING COMAPANY

CARLING

BEATTIE McGuinness BUNGAY

(BMB)

(Source: <http://www.bmj.com/content/340/bmj.b5650.full>)

Research has established that alcohol advertising, like that for tobacco and fast food, influences behaviour. It encourages young people to drink alcohol sooner and in greater quantities. (Source: <http://www.bmj.com/content/340/bmj.b5650.full>) with all the research and finding it does point out that social and ethical responsibility has some major concern, as per the survey taken by 70 general participants of UK even they have agrees to an extent that yes alcohol advertisement does encourage drinking to some extent. Starting with questionnaire people do agree to restrict alcohol advertisement to some extend which is very much reflecting the unseen picture of impact of alcohol advertisement in their eyes. They do accept that the alcohol advertisement do encourage drinking but they to a level deny the fact that alcohol advertisement encourage them personally to drink. With an explanation asked if they do accept that according to them if any alcohol advertisement do reflect the social responsibility and the total number of answer to this was " NO" but if talk about their responsibility in considering to complaint about any of the unethical alcohol advertisement then it again comes too " NO". To give an example, from my one of the observation while the research, I realised one of the beer advertisement which do write " drink responsibly" but this responsible behaviour of the alcohol advertisement was

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so much tiny that it could not be noticed. If we look into opinion of other experts and communicator than we have

"(Reuters) - Britain's system of self regulation on alcohol advertising is failing and companies are " pushing the boundaries" of codes of practice to lure in young drinkers, social marketing experts said Thursday." One of the main causes for encouraging drinking is " the pricing" which of course is associated with marketing. A very low pricing does attract people to drinking, " today alcohol is cheaper than water"

The Labour government is coming under increasing pressure from health experts to consider setting minimum prices for alcohol to curb widespread binge drinking by young people with access to cheap drink. Thursday's report was published by the British Medical Journal, whose deputy editor Trish Groves said it was now time to clamp down on alcohol promotion and set a minimum price per unit of alcohol to try to halt a rise in alcohol-related illness." It is time to put away the rhetoric ... that alcohol misuse is largely an individual problem best avoided and managed through education, counselling, and medical treatment," she wrote in a commentary on the study." Instead, the UK needs to embrace the idea that the health and societal costs of alcohol misuse are best prevented through legislation on pricing and marketing." She noted that while the British government is spending 17. 6 million pounds on alcohol education in 2009/10, that figure was dwarfed by the UK drinks industry's 600 million to 800 million pounds annual spend on promoting alcohol. Prime Minister Gordon Brown rejected a recommendation from chief medical officer Liam Donaldson last March that a minimum price of 50 pence should be set per unit of alcohol in England, -- a <https://assignbuster.com/the-controversial-topic-of-alcohol-advertisement/>

level which would nearly double the price of some cheap beers and wines. Donaldson said such a move would reduce the annual number of crimes by 46, 000 and hospital admissions by 100, 000 while cutting absenteeism from work, saving 1 billion pounds a year.

(Source: <http://uk.reuters.com/article/idUKTRE60K05Q20100121>)

ALCOHOL AND SPORTS

If alcohol industry is seriously following the voluntary codes set up by organizations then why still alcohol adverting is too blamed for encouraging drinking in society? Or is it that alcohol advertisement voluntary codes set up are not so restricted effective that they are able to stop the impact on the alcohol advertisement which is encouraging drinking; if we look into the alcohol marketing in sports ground, that that may be the one of the strongest impact which has on alcohol consumption.

Heineken sponsors European rugby.

According to Portman group, a public relation body is tied up with companies like InBev and Carlsberg, and has estimated that alcohol firms spend an estimate amount around £150m to £200m on advertising and marketing in UK every year. Sport in many countries is god, and everyone worship god, but this is another form of marketing which means " following the god", alcohol industry knows very well if not advertisement then why not to use the sports and sports players as the source of promotion of alcohol and this has proved to be right because recently there is very much rise in alcohol consumption, the specific period of while sports tournament takes place any

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of the store will provide alcohol on the cheap deals and if even though not, then the culture of UK do force them to consume them.

According to Professor Ian Gilmore, president of the Royal College of Physicians and chairman of the Alcohol Health Alliance UK, backed calls for a ban on alcohol and sports sponsorship: " Notwithstanding the claims of their lobbyists, it is obvious that drinks industry sponsorship of sport is less about supporting an important part of our national culture and more brand positioning and profit. We need to ask whether this continued alliance and the mixed messages such deals send to young people and adults alike is actually appropriate."

(Source: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2009/nov/10/addiction-journal-alcohol-sport-sponsorship>)

But on other hand the following statement was urge " The alcohol and advertising industries have welcomed a study that claims that a ban on alcohol sponsorship would not curb underage alcohol abuse." The Cardiff Business School study, published by the International Journal of Sports Marketing & Sponsorship, found that there are no significant statistical correlations between sports sponsorship awareness and attitudes to alcohol use among underage drinkers. The survey asked 294 pupils aged 14-15 from five schools about their intentions to drink alcohol and to get drunk on the forthcoming weekend. The same students were also asked about their attitudes to drinking alcohol, their involvement in sport and a series of questions to determine their awareness of sponsors. The report's author, Dr Fiona Davies, says although alcohol sponsorship does play a part in "

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perpetuating and normalising" the culture of drunkenness, prohibition will not work on its own.

And David Poley, chief executive of alcohol industry body The Portman Group, says the study provides evidence that sponsorship " has a comparatively minor effect on drinking attitudes."

(Source: <http://www.marketingweek.co.uk/alcohol-industry-welcomes-alcohol-sponsorship-report/3009929>. article)

ALCOHOL ADVERTISEMENT AND ITS EFFECTS:

Watching alcohol adverts on television may make young people drink more alcohol, according to a recent study published in Archives of Paediatrics and Adolescent Medicine,

Researchers at the University of Connecticut asked nearly 2000 young people aged between 15 and 26 about how much they drank. The answers were compared with the amount spent on advertising alcohol on television in their area. The interviews were carried out over a two-year period. Some people were interviewed up to four times.

The study revealed that American youths who watched more alcohol adverts tended to drink more alcohol too. For each " extra" advert watched in a month, the interviewees consumed one percent more alcohol. Across all age groups, for every extra dollar per head spent on adverts in each television area, alcohol consumption rose by three percent.

They concluded that alcohol advertising contributes to increase drinking among young people. The study also seemed to undermine previous claims that alcohol advertising has no effect on underage drinkers.

It focused on advertising spending information rather than asking interviewees to estimate how many alcohol adverts they had seen.

(SOURCE: http://www.bupa.co.uk/health_information/html/health_news/060106alcoholadvertising.html

Snyder L, Milici F, Slater M, Sun H, Strizhakova Y. Effects of Alcohol

Advertising Exposure on Drinking Among Youth. Archives of Paediatrics and Adolescent Medicine 2006; 160: 18-24.)

The National Institute of Clinical Excellence (Nice) has said the government should consider a complete ban on alcohol advertising in order to stop underage and binge drinking. Nice, which also called for a minimum price to be imposed on alcoholic drinks, has issued a 91-page document which claims that one in four adults in England is drinking what it deemed a "dangerous amount of alcohol", which it says costs the NHS about £2.7bn a year. The report suggests a number of changes to marketing legislation, which it claims could stem alcohol abuse. The report says: "There is evidence that alcohol advertising does affect children and young people."

One of its proposals is a "complete alcohol advertising ban to protect children and young people from exposure to alcohol advertising".

The report goes on to propose a review of rules, suggesting that new limits are set by the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) to reduce the

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proportion of children exposed to alcohol, and ensure that all alcohol advertising " particularly when it involves new media and product placement, is covered by a stringent regulatory system".

(Source: <http://www.brandrepublic.com/news/1007168/Government-advisers-support-ban-alcohol-ads/>)

EXPERIMENT: 1

Objective: To test whether alcohol advertising expenditures and the degree of exposure to alcohol advertisements affect alcohol consumption by youth.

Design: Longitudinal panel using telephone surveys.

Setting: Households in 24 US media markets, April 1999 to February 2001.

Participants: Individuals aged 15 to 26 years were randomly sampled within households and households within media markets. Markets were systematically selected from the top 75 media markets, representing 79% of the US population. The baseline refusal rate was 24%. Sample sizes per wave were 1872, 1173, 787, and 588. Data on alcohol advertising expenditures on television, radio, billboards, and newspapers were collected.

Main Exposures: Market alcohol advertising expenditures per capita and self-reported alcohol advertising exposure in the prior month.

Main Outcome Measure: Self-reported number of alcoholic drinks consumed in the prior month.

Results: Youth who saw more alcohol advertisements on average drank more (each additional advertisement seen increased the number of drinks consumed by 1% [event rate ratio, 1.01; 95% confidence interval, 1.01-1.02]). Youth in markets with greater alcohol advertising expenditures drank more (each additional dollar spent per capita raised the number of drinks consumed by 3% [event rate ratio, 1.03; 95% confidence interval, 1.01-1.05]). Examining only youth younger than the legal drinking age of 21 years, alcohol advertisement exposure and expenditures still related to drinking. Youth in markets with more alcohol advertisements showed increases in drinking levels into their late 20s, but drinking plateaued in the early 20s for youth in markets with fewer advertisements. Control variables included age, gender, ethnicity, high school or college enrolment, and alcohol sales.

Conclusion: Alcohol advertising contributes to increase drinking among youth.

(Source: <http://archpedi.ama-assn.org/cgi/content/abstract/160/1/18>, Leslie B. Snyder, PhD; Frances Fleming Milici, PhD; Michael Slater, PhD; Helen Sun, MA; Yuliya Strizhakova, PhD Arch Pediatr Adolesc Med. 2006; 160: 18-24.)

OTHER EXPERIMENT:

BY NATIONAL INSTITUTE ON ALCOHOL ABUSE AND ALCOHOLISM RESEARCH
MONOGRAPH - 28

Alcohol beverage advertisers are exploring a variety of ways to protect and extend their reach. Brewers are the most vigorous in this effort. "Faced with similar problem," a marketing study reported, "much other industry would

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have pulled in their marketing horn long ago. The brewing industry's response has been almost the opposite. It is doing everything possible to attract new customers, and one brewing industry executive calls it a 'panic'" (Hume 1985, p. 16) while most beer advertising budgets shrank, the top three beer brands increased their advertising by more than 20 percent (Nutrition Action Health letter 1992).

By McCarty and Ewing

Experiment was conducted by McCarty and Ewing (1983). The subjects viewed a set of magazine ad slides for eight distilled spirit products or for non alcohol products as part of a supposed evaluation of sexual stimuli in advertising messages. In the counterbalanced design, half saw the alcohol ads first and half saw them following the non alcohol ads; a second manipulation involved access to a distilled spirit mixed drink versus a soft drink before evaluating the slides. During a break between exposure sessions, all subjects fixed drinks with liquor and mixers at a private bar before viewing the opposite set of slides. Each ad was shown for 30 seconds initially and 2.5 minutes during a later group discussion of sexual content. There was no significant main effect of advertising on amount of liquor poured, rate of consumption, or blood alcohol content (BAC) level on a breath testing device at the end of the study. However there was a significant interaction: among subjects in the alcohol pre drink condition, those viewing alcohol ads in the second slide session following the break had higher BAC scores than subjects who viewed these slides first. The author concluded that " the higher blood alcohol levels suggest that alcoholic advertisi