Introduction

Alcohol advertising is pervasive. Alcohol companies spent more than $8.2 billion placing 2,664,919 alcohol product advertisements on U.S. television from 2001-2009.1

Exposure to alcohol advertising increases the likelihood of adolescent alcohol use initiation and/or consumption.2,3

One promising approach (media literacy) may help counter potential effects of alcohol advertising on adolescents.

Media literacy advocates a critical analysis of various kinds of mass media messages, an identification of the functions of the media, and an engagement that encourages students to critically and consciously examine media messages.4

The Youth Message Development (YMD) curriculum incorporates media literacy principles to reduce underage drinking in high school students.

Method

Sample – N = 72 print alcohol counter-advertisements
- 49 created by small groups of high school students from across Pennsylvania
- 23 created by small groups of college students in New Jersey

Qualitative Content Analysis:
- A combination of deductive and inductive coding
- 1º, deductive coding - operationalized based on YMD curriculum content - ad claims (presence/absence of slogans, counter-arguments or consequences), persuasion strategies (presence/absence of endorsement, glamour/sex appeal, having fun/being cool, positive impact, perceived risk), and production components (people, setting, font, and visuals)
- 2º, inductive coding - open coding and axial coding to identify specific consequences or counter-arguments utilized in posters

Results

Ad Claims:
- Overall, both high school students and college students used slogans in their posters in order to highlight the main point or message of the ad
- The posters displayed negative consequences of alcohol use the most, followed by displays of both negative and positive consequences, with positive consequences of not using alcohol depicted the least

Persuasion Strategies:
- Identifiable persuasion strategies used in only 37% and 30% of the posters created by high school and college students
- Having fun/being one of the gang most frequently used persuasion strategy

Production Components:
- All posters incorporated a range of production components such as setting, image size, and object placement
- A clear setting was evident in 39 high school and 16 college posters, and included party, beach, accident site, bathing suit, sport event, prison, graveyard, and hospital
- Use of color was evident in all of the posters, and most of the posters utilized more than 6 colors
- A majority of posters utilized 2 or more different font sizes to highlight their message

Discussion

- Long-term effects (such as death) may not resonate as well with adolescents compared to more immediate and short-term outcomes of alcohol use (such as vomiting, hangover)
- College students identified some different outcomes including unwanted sexual encounters
- Negative consequences dominated, with positive consequences of not using alcohol underutilized
- Image-related slogans used more frequently than stand-alone slogans

References


Future Directions

- Examine how other adolescents perceive adolescent-created alcohol counter-advertisements and assess the effectiveness of such counter-advertisements
- Explore adolescent engagement in message creation leading to self-persuasion and increased resistance to other alcohol-related influences (and therefore decreased alcohol use)
- Media literacy provides a useful venue for engaging youth in critical examination of persuasive alcohol advertising and in creation of alcohol counter-advertisements

Acknowledgements and Contact Info

This study was supported by grant number R21 DA027146 from the National Institute on Drug Abuse to Kathryn Greene, MD, and Golden Turtle, Inc. The findings and conclusions in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the National Institutes of Health.


Example Posters

Table. Prevalence and Difference Between Content Categories in Counter-Alcohol Posters Created by High School and College Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>High School</th>
<th>College</th>
<th>χ²</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Slogans</td>
<td>49 (100%)</td>
<td>23 (100%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Consequences</td>
<td>49 (100%)</td>
<td>23 (100%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Negative conseq</td>
<td>33 (67.35%)</td>
<td>14 (60.87%)</td>
<td>.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol-related ill</td>
<td>20 (60.61%)</td>
<td>6 (42.86%)</td>
<td>1.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drunk driving</td>
<td>7 (21.21%)</td>
<td>4 (28.57%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual encounter</td>
<td>2 (6.06%)</td>
<td>6 (42.86%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional conseq</td>
<td>10 (30.30%)</td>
<td>7 (50%)</td>
<td>.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Death</td>
<td>11 (33.33%)</td>
<td>2 (14.29%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical conseq</td>
<td>13 (39.39%)</td>
<td>1 (7.14%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Positive conseq</td>
<td>3 (6.12%)</td>
<td>3 (13.04%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Negative-positive comparison</td>
<td>13 (26.53%)</td>
<td>6 (26.09%)</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Before-after depict.</td>
<td>10 (20.41%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Differences between high school and college student posters not statistically significant for any of the content categories

Aims of the Study

To evaluate how other adolescents perceive adolescent-created alcohol counter-advertisements and to print alcohol counter-advertisements (the last activity)

To examine differences in application of YMD curriculum content to print alcohol counter-advertisements created by high school adolescents and college students

Youth Message Development (YMD)

Adolescents and college students learned through the YMD curriculum in creating their own print alcohol counter

To evaluate how well the students incorporated information and refine counter-advertisements.

Goal

Students apply critical analysis and media message construction skills to actively create their own alcohol counter-advertisements.

YMD curriculum designed to highlight the role of media messages and refine counter-arguing skills through a BRIEF intervention:
- Target audience and understanding persuasive techniques (with a focus on four techniques - endorsement, sex, humor, and having fun/being one of the gang)
- Analysis of claims made in alcohol advertising (including slogans, counter-arguing, and consequences), and
- Production components in alcohol advertising (i.e. the use of people, setting, font, and visuals)
- Planning and creating a poster utilizing persuasion and production strategies learned

Aims of the Study

To evaluate how other students incorporated information learned through the YMD curriculum in creating their own print alcohol counter-advertisements (the last activity)

To examine differences in application of YMD curriculum content to print alcohol counter-advertisements created by high school adolescents and college students

References


This study was supported by grant number R21 DA027146 from the National Institute on Drug Abuse to Kathryn Greene, MD, and Golden Turtle, Inc. The findings and conclusions in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the National Institutes of Health.