

The DRAM, Vol. 20(11) - How common is alcohol marketing exposure among U.S. youth?

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Alcohol marketing exposure [contributes to underage drinking behaviors](#), such as starting to drink early and drinking more. Previous research suggests that exposure differs by gender and race/ethnicity, with [girls and racial/ethnic minority youth](#) exposed to alcohol advertisements at a higher rate. This week, The DRAM reviews a [study by Lei Zhang and Marissa B. Esser](#) that examined youth alcohol marketing exposure in the U.S. by age, gender, race/ethnicity, and media use.

What were the research questions?

How common is alcohol marketing exposure among U.S. youth? How does the likelihood of exposure differ by age, gender, race/ethnicity, and media use?

What did the researchers do?

The researchers analyzed data from the [2021 YouthStyles Survey](#), which was completed by 833 youth (ages 12 to 17) across the United States. Respondents [self-reported](#) how often they see or hear advertisements or promotions for alcohol via broadcast media¹ and the internet. The researchers then conducted [logistic regressions](#) to estimate the likelihood of alcohol marketing exposure by age, gender, race/ethnicity, and media use.

What did they find?

Just over half of the respondents (53%) reported alcohol marketing exposure via broadcast media, and half (51%) reported exposure when browsing the internet. After accounting for age, gender, and media use, Hispanic youth were more likely to be exposed to alcohol marketing than non-Hispanic White youth (see Figure). As kids aged, they were more likely to be exposed to alcohol marketing. Alcohol marketing exposure did not differ by gender or media use.

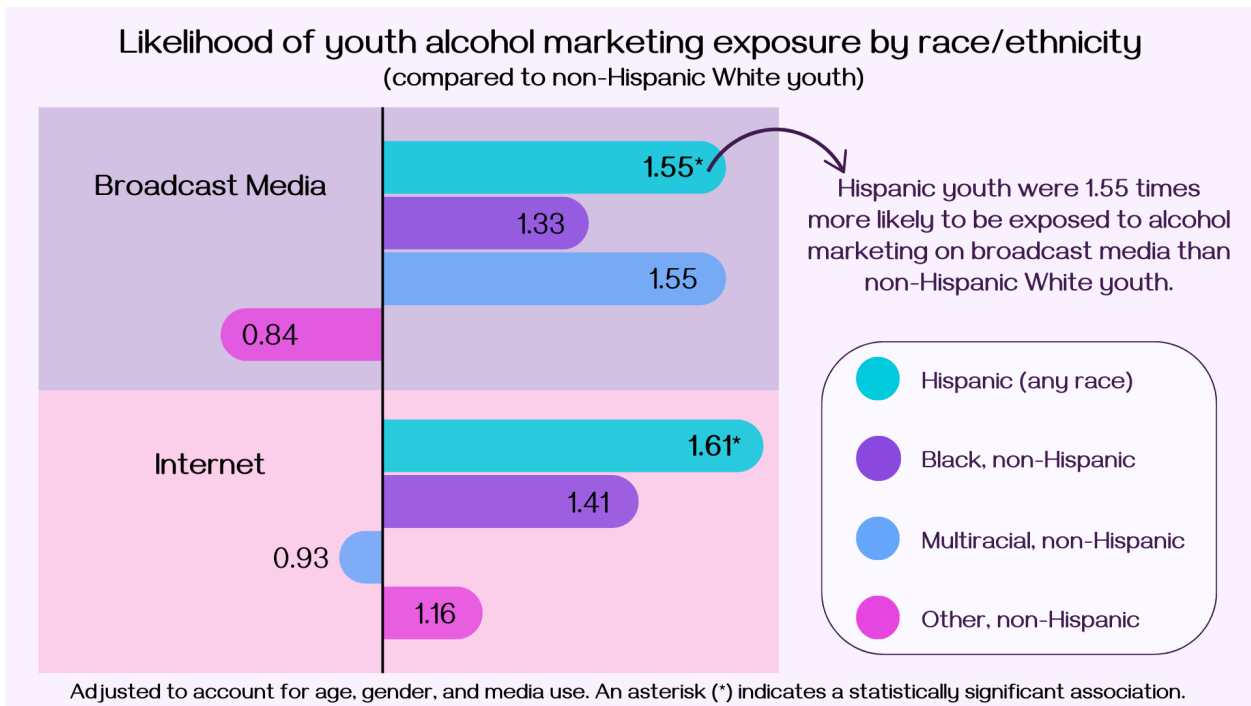


Figure. Likelihood of youth alcohol marketing exposure via broadcast media and the internet by race/ethnicity (compared to non-Hispanic White youth). [Odds ratios](#) were adjusted to account for age, gender, and media use. An asterisk (*) indicates a [statistically significant](#) association. Click image to enlarge.

Why do these findings matter?

Youth are commonly exposed to alcohol marketing, both via broadcast media and when browsing the internet. Exposure via the internet is especially concerning, as [engagement with digital alcohol marketing](#) has been associated with increased risky drinking behaviors. Strategies to combat alcohol marketing and prevent underage drinking should target [misperceptions of alcohol use and social drinking norms](#). These strategies should also be tailored for [Spanish-speaking populations](#), who are at higher risk of alcohol marketing exposure.

Every study has limitations. What are the limitations in this study?

The researchers did not define “advertisements or promotion of alcohol”, so respondents might not have considered drinking scenes or product placement in television shows or movies as promotion. It is also unclear whether respondents thought “browsing the internet” included social media.

For more information:

For those interested in learning more about their alcohol use, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention provides a free and anonymous screening in [English](#) and [Spanish](#). The [National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism](#) also

has tips and resources for people struggling with problem drinking. For additional drinking self-help tools, please visit our [Addiction Resources](#) page.

— Caitlyn Matykiewicz, MPH

1. Broadcast media included watching television, streaming videos (e.g., Netflix, Hulu, YouTube, Amazon Prime), and going to the movies.
