

# Why listening to rap music drives teenagers to drink: Study finds they want the same alcohol brands as their idols

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By [Sara Malm](#)

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Teenagers who listen to music which makes frequent references to specific alcohol brands are more likely to binge drink, a study has found.

By studying contemporary rap and pop music, researchers found that teenagers are exposed to an average of eight alcohol brands per day.

Teens, keen to emulate the behavior of their idols, want to get their hands on the same drinks rappers and singers are consuming, more often than not high ABV spirits and Champagne rather than soda.

Emulating behaviour: When Armand de Brignac champagne appeared in Jay-Z's video for Show Me What You Got in 2006, it became the brand to drink, and the champagne also gets a name drop in his wife Beyonce's music

Cognac brand Hennessy featured in countless early noughties rap songs and 50 Cent single-handedly taught millions that Bacardi was what you drank on your birthday in 2003 global hit In Da Club.

The success of Armand de Brignac Champagne, sometimes known as Ace of Spades, is much down to its appearance in the video for Jay-Z's 2006 song Show Me What You Got.

Jay-Z, a famous Cristal Champagne drinker, is seen refusing a bottle of the famous champagne before he accepts the lavish gold Armand de Brignac bottle.

It has since been associated with the music mogul and his wife Beyonce also name dropped the champagne in her 2013 hit Drunk in Love, making sure all her fans know that's the drink of choice for a 'gangster wife'.

The number of references to alcohol in rap songs has increased more than four-fold since the hip-hop genre began in the late 1970s, according to the research.

Dangerous inspiration: Researchers at Dartmouth College, U.S. found that teenagers are exposed to an average of eight alcohol brands per day through music (stock image)

Lead author Doctor Brian Primack, associate professor of medicine and paediatrics at Pittsburgh University's School of Medicine, said: 'Every year, the average adolescent is exposed to about 3,000 references to alcohol brands while listening to music.'

## STARS OF NAME DROPPING

Here are just a few examples of pop stars and rappers mentioning particular brands of spirits in their music or show them in their videos:

- Bacardi rum  
50 Cent - In Ca Club (2003)
- Armand de Brignac Champagne  
Jay Z - Show Me What You Got (2006)  
Jay Z ft Swizz Beats - On To The Next One (2009)  
Beyonce - Drunk in Love (2013)
- Crown Royal Whisky  
Jennifer Lopez - On the floor (2011)
- Ciroc vodka  
P. Diddy/Puff Daddy/Sean Combs/Puffy - At all times, he owns the brand
- Patron tequila  
Bruno Mars - Marry You (2012)  
Busta Rhymes, Mary J. Blige, Missy Elliott, DMX, Lloyd Banks, Rah Digga, Papoose, Ne-Yo - Touch it (remix) (2009)

'It is important that we understand the impact of these references in an age group that can be negatively affected by alcohol consumption.'

Senior author Doctor James Sargent, professor of paediatrics in the Geisel School of Medicine at Dartmouth College, said: 'Brand references may serve as advertising, even if they are not paid for by the industry.'

'This is why it is useful to examine the influence of brand mentions.'

A survey showed that 59 per cent of Americans aged 15 to 23 has consumed a complete alcoholic drink, defined as 12 ounces of beer, five ounces of wine or 1.5 ounces of hard liquor at one time.

Of those, 18 per cent reported bingeing at least monthly, and 37 per cent reported having had problems, such as injuries, due to alcohol.

In the survey, which could be completed either online or on paper, participants were given the titles of popular songs that include alcohol mentions and asked if they liked or owned the song.

They also were tested to determine if they could spontaneously recall what brand of alcohol was mentioned in the lyrics.

Survey participants who could correctly recall alcohol brands in songs had more than twice the odds of having had a complete alcoholic drink, compared to those who could not recall the brand, even after adjusting for factors including age, socioeconomic status, and alcohol use by friends or parents.

The participants who could identify the alcohol brands in songs also had greater odds of having ever bingeed on alcohol.

Not a rapper, still a terrible influence: Young teenagers look to DUI-ing Justin Bieber, not exactly a clean cut source of inspiration

Bacardi just called...: In 2003, 50 cent taught a generation which rum was the one to go for when he

rapped that we were all 'gonna sip Bacardi, like it's your birthday'

Dr Primack added: 'A surprising result of our analysis was that the association between recalling alcohol brands in popular music and alcohol drinking in adolescents was as strong as the influence of parental and peer drinking and an adolescent's tendency toward sensation-seeking.

'This may illustrate the value that this age group places on the perceived opinions and actions of music stars.

'Average exposure is about eight alcohol brand name mentions per day. This is based on average exposure of 2.5 hours of music per day, with three to four brand mentions each hour. However, this is just an average. For some kids, it will be more, and for others it will be less.'

Lisa Henriksen, senior research scientist at the Stanford Prevention Research Centre, said: 'Alcohol brand names are quite prevalent in popular music.

'For example, hip-hop/rap lyrics favour luxury brands, such as Cristal and Hennessy, and brand references in rap music have increased four-fold over time, from eight per cent in 1979 to 44 per cent in 1997. It would be foolish to think that the alcohol industry is unaware of and uninvolved with alcohol-brand mentions in music.

'The strategy of associating products with hip culture and celebrities who are attractive to youth comes straight from a playbook written by the tobacco industry.

'Even drinking and binge drinking were more common among young people who liked or owned popular songs with alcohol brand names.'

The results were published online in the journal *Alcoholism: Clinical and Experimental Research*.