

# Music with alcohol references driving teens to binge drinking

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In the survey, participants were given the titles of popular songs with alcohol mentions and asked if they liked the song or owned the song. They were also tested to determine if they could spontaneously recall what brand of alcohol was mentioned in the song.

"Every year, the average adolescent is exposed to about 3,000 references to alcohol brands while listening to music. It is important that we understand the impact of these references to alcohol brands in an age group that can be negatively impacted by alcohol consumption," cautioned Brian A Primack, an associate professor at University of Pittsburgh's school of medicine.

"Brand references may serve as advertising, even if they are not paid for by the industry," James D Sargent, co-director of the cancer control research programme at Norris Cotton Cancer Center, added.

The policy and educational interventions designed to limit the influence of alcohol brand references in popular music could be important in reducing alcohol consumption in teenagers and young adults.

Of the 2,541 participants who completed the survey, 1,488, or 59 percent, reported having had a complete alcoholic drink. Of those, 18 percent reported bingeing - or drinking heavily over a short period of time - at least monthly and 37 percent reported having had problems, such as injuries due to alcohol.

Survey participants who could correctly recall alcohol brands in songs had more than twice the odds of having had a complete alcoholic drink. The participants who could identify the alcohol brands in songs also had greater odds of binge alcohol use.

"A surprising result 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," Primack commented.

This may illustrate the value that this age group places in the perceived opinions and actions of music stars, he noted. The results of the study were published in the journal *Alcoholism: Clinical & Experimental Research*.