

# Study: Music Is Just Advertisement for Alcohol Brands

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How many times can you hear *gold teeth*/*Grey Goose*/*trippin' in the bathroom* before you get a hankering for some vodka? And yes, Lorde may be saying those are things we'll never have, not being royals and all, but many non-royal adolescents have made do with cheaper alternatives. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 39 percent of adolescents have had a drink in the past 30 days, and 22 percent qualify as binge-drinkers. In a [new survey](#) on adolescent binge-drinking published in *Alcoholism: Clinical & Experimental Research*, researchers at Dartmouth College and the University of Pittsburgh look at how these tossed-off brand mentions in music could affect young people's drinking behaviors.

Enough exposure to anything has an effect, and previous research has shown that for adolescents, music is the fastest-growing form of media they're exposed to, listening to about 2.5 hours a day as of 2010. They hear 14 references to drinking per song-hour, and about 8 brand-name mentions.

Those who scored highest on "alcohol song receptivity" were two times as likely to have binged.

The researchers surveyed 2,541 15-to-23-year-olds, offering them 10 random songs that had alcohol mentions in them and asking if they liked the song, owned the song, and if they could identify what brand was mentioned in the song. To assess what role alcohol played in their lives, researchers looked at whether participants had ever drunk a whole drink, if they had ever binged, if they binged monthly, and whether they'd ever experienced injuries or memory loss after drinking.

"Classic theories of communication suggest that receptivity to a message involves not only exposure to a message, but also an understanding of and agreement with the message," the study reads. This is why they asked if participants liked the songs in question.

Then, they controlled for many other factors that could influence drinking behavior, such as demographics like age, race, and socioeconomic class, as well as sensation-seeking tendencies and the drinking behaviors of their friends and parents.

The survey found that those who scored highest on the measures of "alcohol song receptivity" were three times as likely to have ever had a drink, and two times as likely to have binged than those who scored lowest. Those who were able to identify at least one brand mentioned in a song were at higher risk in both of those categories.

"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," Brian Primack, the study's lead author, said in a press release.

While there are many factors that influence a young person's decision to binge-drink, it does seem, based on this survey, that songs that mention drinking, or brands of alcohol, may be acting as unpaid advertisements for those brands. Next up: Obtain data on whether sales of Grey Goose have spiked among people who purchased "Royals."

