

Alcohol sports sponsorship and harmful drinking

There is strong and consistent evidence to show exposure to alcohol advertising increases the likelihood that young people start drinking at an earlier age, and to drink more if they already use alcohol.

The Organisation for Economic Development (OECD) and World Health Organisation (WHO) recommend governments take action to protect children and young people from exposure to alcohol marketing, including investigating the introduction of a total ban.

Alcohol sponsorship of sport is a hotly contested issue: Alcohol companies sponsor most high profile tournaments and concerns have been raised about the high volume of child viewers. Bans are in place in France and Norway, and the governments of Ireland and New Zealand are considering proposals.

A systematic literature review was conducted to examine the evidence to show a relationship between alcohol sports sponsorship and consumption. Studies identified data for 12,760 people in a number of high-income countries.

All studies indicate exposure to alcohol sports sponsorship is associated with increased levels of consumption and risky drinking amongst schoolchildren and sportspeople, although the reliability of results varies across the studies. Studies conducted in the UK found:

Amongst Welsh Schoolchildren, awareness of alcohol sports sponsorship was linked to a 17% higher chance of boys, and 13% higher chance of girls getting drunk at the weekend. When the same schoolchildren had both positive attitudes towards alcohol and awareness of alcohol sports sponsorship, the chances of getting drunk at the weekend were 26% higher for boys and 27% higher for girls.

Amongst UK university sportspeople, those receiving alcohol industry sponsorship were 4 times more likely to report hazardous drinking than non-sponsored sportspeople.

This evidence, combined with the well-established evidence base to link exposure to alcohol marketing and adolescent drinking, is sufficient to warrant an investigation into the impact of restricting alcohol sports sponsorship in the UK on children and young people.

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Publication

[Association Between Alcohol Sports Sponsorship and Consumption: A Systematic Review.](#)

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