

# TV shows convey mixed messages about alcohol

March 25 2009

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Efforts to dissuade youth consumption through negative alcohol consumption depictions can be thwarted by portrayals of positive consumption in prime-time television programming. A new study in the *Journal of Consumer Affairs* reveals that television series often portray mixed messages about alcohol, but the positive and negative messages were shown differently.

The research, led by Dale W. Russell and Cristel A. Russell, research scientists at the Prevention Research Center, is based on a content analysis of prime-time [television](#) series from the 2004-05 season. The primary, more central, [alcohol](#) message was often associated with negative elements such as crime, addiction, or lowered job performance while the secondary, more subtle [visual message](#) was almost always associated with positive outcomes, such as having fun or partying. Thus, the positive messages might undermine any negative messages.

"Policymakers and parents need to remain vigilant in monitoring alcohol depictions, especially product placements, given the current environment of self-regulation of the alcohol industry's marketing/advertising efforts," the authors conclude.

Because of television's effect on the audience's attitudes and behaviors, the prevalence of alcohol messages in the content of television programs raises concerns over their likely impact on audiences, especially young ones. The research team is continuing its efforts to study how such messages are processed and the consequences they have on viewers'

beliefs about alcohol and drinking behaviors.

Source: Wiley ([news](#) : [web](#))

Citation: TV shows convey mixed messages about alcohol (2009, March 25) retrieved 19 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2009-03-tv-convey-messages-alcohol.html>

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