Deceptive Industry Messages of “Healthy Drinking”

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As required by the Alcohol Policy 18 Conference, I/we have signed a disclosure statement and note the following conflict(s) of interest:

We have no relevant conflicts to disclose.
The Elephants in the Room

NIAAA

BIG

ALCOHOL
Moderate Drinking and Cardiovascular Health Trial

• Studies effects of low-level drinking on ACE and other medium-term harms

• Raised $67.7 million from industry

• “A definitive clinical trial ... is necessary if alcohol is to be recommended as part of a healthy diet.” (NYT 3/17/18)
Acute Risks of Ethanol Use

• Injuries
• Violence, crime & victimization
• Risky sex and STI infection
• Alcohol poisoning
• Dangerous driving
Chronic Risks of Ethanol Use

• CVD and high blood pressure
• Cancers
• Liver disease, cirrhosis
• Dementia and cognitive decline
• Depression, anxiety
• Social problems
• Dependence
Harm to United States

- 88,000 deaths/year (CDC 2018)
- 3rd most common preventable cause of death. (Mokdad et al. 2000)
- $249 billion in costs from excessive drinking (Sacks et al. 2015)
- From 2002 – 2013, risky drinking +30%, AUD +49% (Grant, Chou & Saha 2017)
PROHIBITED ADVERTISING PRACTICES

Read more about the advertising regulations listed in the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR): Wine (27 CFR Part 4), distilled spirits (27 CFR Part 5), and malt beverages (27 CFR Part 7) online at:

www.ttb.gov

Generally speaking, the regulations prohibit:

- Statements that are False or Untrue
- Statements that are Inconsistent with Approved Product Labels
- False or Misleading Statements that are Disparaging of a Competitor's Product
- Health-Related Statements that are False or Misleading
- Misleading Guarantees
  (Money back guarantees are not prohibited)

For a complete listing of the prohibited practices, please review the following regulations:

- Wine – 27 CFR 4.64
- Distilled Spirits – 27 CFR 5.65
- Malt Beverages – 27 CFR 7.54

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT

ADVERTISING ALCOHOL BEVERAGE PRODUCTS

DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

ALCOHOL AND TOBACCO TAX AND TRADE BUREAU
Dr. Mike Is a Physician...
...Along With 20,678 Others
Ingredient Claims
Ingredient Claims

TOP CERTIFIED ORGANIC Reds

TheMommyPromotion.com
Ingredient Claims

INTRODUCING THE WORLD’S FIRST
SUGAR-FREE
GLUTEN-FREE
VODKA FAMILY

Devotion Vodka

80 PROOF

facebook.com/devotionvodka devotionvodka.com twitter.com/devotionvodka

Information provided is not intended to imply that Devotion Vodka or any other Alcoholic Beverage provides any health benefits. Please Drink Responsibly | 2012 Devotion Vodka, Devotion Spirits, Inc., Philadelphia, PA. Vodka 40% ALC. By Vol.
Pinkwashing

- Alcohol companies use breast cancer charities to market product

- Alcohol use increases risk of breast cancer
  - +12% risk for every 10g alcohol/day (Allen et al. 2009)
  - +50% risk for 3 drinks/day vs. nondrinkers (Hamajima et al. 2002)
  - Risks for “moderate” drinkers substantially increased by periodic binge drinking (White et al. 2017)
Alcohol Festivals for Breast Cancer
Harm Reduction

“Harm reduction is a set of practical strategies and ideas aimed at reducing negative consequences associated with drug use.

Harm reduction is also a movement for social justice built on a belief in, and respect for, the rights of people who use drugs.” (HRC 2018)
AB InBev Smart Drinking Goals

Expanding product portfolio

More consumers are looking for alternatives to traditional beer that are light, refreshing and in-sync with their active lifestyles. An ideal choice for occasions like a work lunch, a casual afternoon with friends and those of people with active lifestyles, we believe the market for No- and Lower-Alcohol beers is likely to grow significantly in the next decade.
Harm Reduced?

• Marketing messages (Vasiljevic et al. 2018):
  – Can be consumed at times one doesn’t usually drink
  – Associations with sports/fitness
  – Low calorie, health ingredients

• Little call to replace ordinary ABV beverages
The Product Modification Playbook

WHY QUIT?
SWITCH TO BLU

- Have the Freedom to Smoke Anywhere
- No Tobacco, No Ash, No Smell
- All Flavors Made in the U.S.A.
Language

• “Drink Responsibly”
  – less prominent than slogan
  – never promoted abstinence
  – never defined “responsible”
  – 88% of responsibility messages promoted the product (Smith, Cukier & Jernigan 2014)
Language

• “Moderate drinking”
  – Frequently not defined
  – ”Varies by individual”
  – Paired w/ positive message e.g. “moderate drinking is part of a healthy lifestyle.” (Hessari & Petticrew 2017)
  – NIAAA: ≤ 1 drink/day for women, ≤ 2 for men
    • But ≥ 8/week women, ≥ 14/week men

NOBODY CALCULATES “1 DRINK” WHEN THEY DRINK
Conclusions

• Health claims are forbidden by TTB but potentially lucrative for industry

• Vague health claims help obscure real hazards of alcohol use, move goalposts for less harmful consumption
Conclusions

• Need stronger regulatory approaches
  – Aggressive definition and promotion of drinking limits
  – Regulatory jurisdiction to health bodies, e.g. FDA

• Industry cannot be trusted to self-regulate

• Government recommendations about “healthy drinking” will open a Pandora’s box
  – Follow lead of tobacco research: industry money MUST be unrestricted grants ONLY