



Children are exposed to much more alcohol advertising when a liquor store is sited near a school

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The physical location of liquor stores near schools can strongly influence the chances of youth accessing and consuming alcohol⁽¹⁾. As children transit to and from school, it is feasible that the presence of liquor stores near schools could also increase their exposure to alcohol advertising. Cumulative exposure to advertising influences alcohol attitudes, intentions and alcohol use⁽²⁾, so reducing children's exposure to alcohol advertising is important to delay the initiation of drinking and reduce future harms. As this has not yet been investigated in Australia, the aim of this study was to investigate whether the presence of a liquor store near a school was associated with an increased prevalence of outdoor alcohol advertising in Perth, Western Australia. We identified all outdoor alcohol advertising within a 500m radius (audit zone) of 64 randomly selected primary and secondary schools from low and high socio-economic areas across metropolitan Perth. We recorded the size, type, setting, and location of each advertisement during field data collection. Each zone was categorised by the presence or absence of at least one liquor store within the school audit zone, and results compared across these stratifications. Over half (56%) of the 64 school audit zones had at least one alcohol advertisement. On average, there were 5.9 alcohol advertisements per zone. School audit zones that contained a liquor store (59%) had over thirty times the average number of alcohol advertisements compared with audit zones that did not contain a liquor store (9.7 vs 0.3). The majority of all the alcohol advertisements identified (63%) were located outside a liquor outlet as opposed to other food businesses (2%), along the roadside (31%), on a bus shelter (3%) or on/outside another business (0.5%). Our findings that Perth schools with a liquor store nearby had more outdoor alcohol advertising within a 500m radius, compared with schools without a nearby liquor store, were independent of school type (primary or secondary) or the socio-economic status of the area. This poses significant concerns about the exposure of underage populations to outdoor alcohol advertising, and the resultant influence on alcohol use. These results underscore the necessity for policy interventions to mitigate children's exposure to alcohol marketing, especially during the daily school commute, by regulating the location of liquor stores and alcohol promotion near schools. It will be important to incorporate the voices of children when developing future policies to assert their right to be consulted, heard and appropriately influence their environments.

Keywords: alcohol; schools; advertising; liquor store

Ethics Declaration

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