

Public Policy on Alcohol Consumption and Accessibility: Implications to its Implementation in Metro Manila Universities and Colleges

Paulo Maria N. Pagkatipunan

Department of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences, College of Medicine and Philippine General Hospital, University of the Philippines Manila

ABSTRACT

Objectives. The study aimed to identify alcohol-related advertisements and access to alcohol outside selected Metro Manila schools as well as to identify alcohol-related ordinances and determine their enforcement.

Methods. An area within 100 meters of ten randomly selected colleges in Metro Manila were included in the study using the Global Positioning System (GPS). These areas were grid-searched for alcohol related advertisements and alcohol outlets. Ordinances related to alcohol were also identified.

Results. An average of six advertisements and 12 establishments which sell alcoholic drinks were seen near the selected colleges in Metro Manila. Three of the five cities where the ten colleges were situated had ordinances which prohibit selling to minors while two cities prohibit issuing of liquor licenses to establishments within 200 meters from a school.

Conclusion. Alcohol-related advertisements and alcohol outlets were plentiful near Metro Manila colleges even when there were ordinances which prohibit giving licenses to establishments to sell alcoholic beverages.

Key Words: alcohol-related advertisements, college drinking, alcohol laws/ordinances, selling alcohol to minors

INTRODUCTION

There is a strong association between alcohol marketing and alcohol consumption and intention to drink alcohol.^{1,2,3,4} This may be compounded by having convenient stores and bars located near academic institutions. The wide availability of alcohol reflects the high alcohol consumption in colleges in Metro Manila.⁵ This study identified alcohol-related advertisements and access to alcohol and liquor outside randomly selected schools in Metropolitan Manila. It also identified alcohol-related ordinances of the cities where the schools were located to determine if there were provisions to protect students from being exposed to alcohol advertisements and from having easy access to alcoholic beverages.

METHODS

Before the commencement of the study, the protocol was approved by the Department of Health Research Ethics Review Committee (DREC).

The colleges involved in the study were public and private schools which were randomly selected for a survey of

Presented as a poster entitled "Alcohol Accessibility and Consumption in Metro Manila Colleges and Universities" at the 15th National Health Research Forum for Action: Bridging Theory and Practice to achieve Kalusugang Pangkalahatan. Oct. 21-22, 2014. Marriott Hotel, Pasay City, Philippines

Corresponding Author: Paulo Maria N. Pagkatipunan, MD, MHA, DPA, DrPH
Department of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences
Philippine General Hospital
University of the Philippines Manila
Taft Avenue, Ermita Manila 1000, Philippines
Telephone: 5548400 loc 2064
Email: paulomnp@yahoo.com

alcohol consumption of students in Metro Manila colleges and universities.⁵ This research is an observational study which involved identifying alcohol outlets and advertisement within 100 meters from the perimeter of each selected school using the Global Positioning System (GPS). These areas were grid-searched for alcohol-related advertisements and alcohol outlets by dividing them into three clusters for the three data collectors; each data collector had an assigned area to walk-through and observe. The data collectors then exchanged assigned areas for the same walkthrough. This was done for validation of data.

The 4 public and 6 private schools were located in 5 cities in the Philippines' National Capital Region. These cities were Manila, Quezon, Mandaluyong, Pasay and Parañaque. Alcohol-related ordinances were taken directly from the city halls and through their web. For anonymity, the schools were designated Pb 1 to 4 for the four public schools and Pv 1 to 6 for the six private schools.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Alcohol Advertisements

Twenty-four alcohol-related advertisements were seen within the 100 meter radius from public colleges (Table 1) included in this study while 26 advertisements were seen within the 100 meters from the private colleges (Table 1). These advertisements were in the form of billboards, posters, tarpaulins, and stickers.

The perimeter within the public schools in the study had no big advertisements like billboards but both public and private schools had posters and tarpaulins all located within 100 meters of the schools (Figures 1, 4 and 5).

A study of outdoor alcohol-related advertisements in 63 Chicago schools⁴ showed that there were an average of about 15 advertisements within 457 meters from each school and it was also found that student's exposure to outdoor alcohol advertising around schools was associated with their subsequent intentions to use alcohol. The study in Metro Manila schools showed that there was an average of five outdoor alcohol advertisements seen within 100 meters of schools.

It has also been shown that when 12-year-olds were highly (75th percentile) exposed to overall alcohol advertising, they were 50% more likely to start drinking a year later compared to those of the same age who were only slightly (25th percentile) exposed to alcohol advertising.¹ Moreover, teenagers would drink more alcohol when in their twenties when they were highly exposed to alcohol advertising as compared to those who were only slightly exposed to alcohol advertising.²

The alcohol industry spends more than \$1 billion each year on measured media advertising, such as television, radio, print, and billboards.⁶ And there is a real public health concern on the potential effects that media portrayals of drinking (in pop music and film) and alcohol advertising on alcohol consumption on the youth. Alcohol consumption in college students has been well studied and it was found that one of the factors associated with heavy drinking in the previous two weeks was outlet advertising.⁷

Future research should explore how advertising alters the youth's and young adults' behavior as regards drinking, and more specifically, heavy drinking in the context of the Philippine culture. Moreover, studies should also be done on the relationship of advertising and the amount of alcohol being drunk.

With studies supporting the positive impact of advertisements on alcohol consumption, it is just fitting that alcohol advertisements should be banned near establishments frequented by the youth, like schools. The schools should coordinate and advocate with their local city officials so that they may have ordinances written and implemented in their jurisdiction.

Alcohol accessibility

A total of fifty-four (54) alcohol outlets (Table 1) were seen within 100 meters outside the public schools included in the study. Of this, eleven were bars/restaurants and small eateries where one can buy and drink alcoholic beverages (Figure 3).

Fifty-five (55) outlets (Table 1) were seen within 100 meters outside the six private schools in the study; of these 55, nine establishments were seen where one can buy and drink alcohol (Figures 2 and 3). Other establishments were pure outlets of alcoholic beverages.

This study showed that, on the average, there were 11 alcohol outlets within 100 meters from the schools. There have been several studies linking excessive alcohol drinking to density of alcohol outlets.^{8,9} There was even evidence showing a relationship among campus violence, student drinking levels and physical availability of alcohol within 3 miles of off-campus outlets.⁷ Even in community settings, findings suggest that heavy drinking and certain alcohol behaviors may be linked to alcohol outlets in the vicinity where they live.¹⁰ Researches showed that regulation of alcohol outlet density may be a useful public health tool for the reduction of excessive alcohol consumption and related harms. And therefore, in the USA, it was recommended that regulatory authorities should control the density and nature of alcohol outlets to prevent the same.¹¹

Table 1. Alcohol-related advertisements located 100 meters from the perimeter and Accessibility in the public and private schools

School	Advertisements				Accessibility		
	Billboard	Poster / tarpaulin	Stickers	Total	Buy	Buy and Drink	Total
Private	7	16	3	26	43	11	54
Public	0	20	4	24	46	9	55
Total	7	36	7	50	89	20	109



Figure 1. Tarpaulins advertising alcoholic beverages guard the door of a restaurant/bar located within 100 meters from the perimeter of Private school.



Figure 2. Accessibility (small eatery) to alcohol located within 100 meters from the perimeter of Pb2. This establishment sells and lets one consume alcoholic beverages inside.

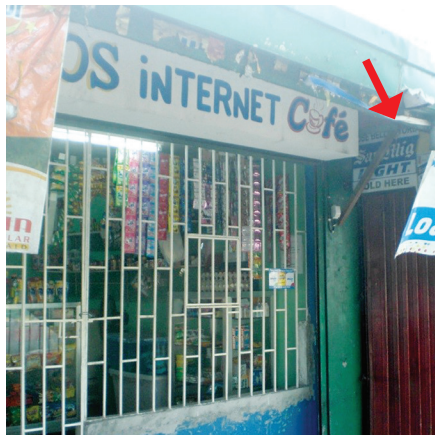


Figure 3. Alcohol outlets located within 100 meters from the perimeter of Pv6. Such stores are considered *sari-sari* (convenience) stores. They usually have alcohol advertisements hanging on the front of the store (red arrows).



Figure 4. Alcohol advertisement and accessibility located within 100 meters from the perimeter of Pv1 (A) and located within 100 meters from the perimeter of Pb3 (B). Sexy models in alluring poses may entice patrons of a store to buy alcoholic beverages.



Figure 5. Alcohol-related advertisements located within 100 meters from the perimeter of a private school. This particular advertisement was seen hanging from a fence and was about 4 x 1.5 meters. Its message also included the name of the barangay.

These studies give sufficient evidence for the regulatory environment, where schools are situated, to offer adequate control of ease of alcohol procurement.

Alcohol-related City Ordinances

There were no national laws pertaining to alcohol advertisements and alcohol accessibility outside academic institutions in the Philippines.

The ten schools in the study were located in five cities within the Metropolitan Manila area: four schools were from Manila City; three schools were from Quezon City; one school each was from Mandaluyong City, Pasay City or Parañaque City.

Upon review of ordinances in the five cities in Metro Manila included in the study, it was found that there were no prohibitions in putting up alcohol-related advertisements near academic institutions.

Among the five cities included in the study, only three, Parañaque City, Pasay City and Quezon City, had provisions prohibiting selling and dispensing of alcohol to minors (below 18 years old); in the other two cities, Manila and Mandaluyong, age prohibitions were not found in their local laws.

Issuing of liquor licenses was prohibited both in Parañaque City and Quezon City if the establishments were 200 meters from any academic institutions. Parañaque City had one private school, Pv6, included in the study and it had 13 establishments where one can buy alcohol and four establishments where one can buy and drink alcohol. Quezon City hosts three schools included in the study. Both Quezon City and Parañaque City each had 17 alcohol outlets within 100 meters from the perimeter of the school.

Informal queries with the patrons of these establishments together with the fact that two of the data collectors in this study were alumni of two of the ten schools in the study, revealed that these establishments do not ask if patrons were minors; in fact, their classmates were able to buy and drink alcohol even when they were minors.

All the foregoing showed that even with ordinances in place, the implementation is in question.

CONCLUSION

Alcohol-related advertisements and alcohol outlets, including bars, pub houses and beer gardens, abound within 100 meters from universities and colleges in Metro Manila. It seems that alcohol establishments dispense alcoholic beverages without asking if the patron was in the age of majority. This occurred even when there were city ordinances which regulate the sale.

Generally, the physical, social and inexpensive availability of alcoholic beverages has been found to be associated with alcohol consumption in the general population and this includes youth and young adults. High densities of alcohol outlets have been associated with many

problems including health and social issues like homicide and violence.¹²

A “wet” environment, an environment where alcohol drinking is generally permitted and there is ease in the availability of alcohol, is a very prominent factor in heavy alcohol consumption in college students. Several other factors have been found to increase binge drinking in colleges. Colleges with large numbers of binge drinkers are characterized by greater visibility and availability of alcohol in their environment and this may be aggravated by the ease of access to alcohol¹³ and if the location of alcohol outlets are within a mile from campus.¹¹ Restrictive alcohol control policies may be imposed especially near academic institutions like colleges. While increasing taxes, and therefore the prices of alcohol, and increasing the age at which one can buy alcohol are in the purview of the national government, restricting the density of outlets within a certain radius of schools may be covered by local ordinances. Another problem in the Philippine setting is the enforcement of laws and ordinances. As can be seen in at least two cities in Metro Manila that even when there were ordinances banning alcohol outlets within 200 meters from academic institutions, these establishments still abound in these areas.

It is then recommended that the schools should serve as watchdogs to help the city officials in the implementation of the local laws. As this study is the first of its kind in the Philippines, more studies should be done on a regular basis and should include the whole country, the results of which should be shared with the local government. In this way, local governments will be aware of the effectiveness of the implementation of their ordinances; and, if they are not implemented, they should beef-up their monitoring capacities including giving stiff penalties to those who do not abide.

Because of overwhelming data on the effect of alcohol consumption in the youth when exposed to alcohol-related advertisements and to the density of alcohol outlets near where they stay, it is about time that local governments should include these factors in their ordinances especially as it pertains to areas around schools.

Statement of Authorship

The author has approved the final version submitted.

Author Disclosure

The author declared no conflict of interest. The original research of the study on which this journal article was based, was commissioned by the Department of Health for its 2012 Health Systems Research Management, in support of the Universal Health Care in the Philippines. The views and opinions contained in this article were those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of the Philippine Department of Health..

Funding Source

This paper was funded by the Philippine Department of Health through the Philippine Department of Science and Technology.

REFERENCES

- Collins RL, Ellickson PL, McCaffrey D, Hambarsoomians K. Early adolescent exposure to alcohol advertising and its relationship to underage drinking. *J Adolesc Health*. 2007;40:(6),527-34.
- Gordon R, MacKintosh AM, Moodie C. The impact of alcohol marketing on youth drinking behavior: a two-stage cohort study. *Alcohol Alcohol*. 2010;45:(5),470-80.
- Snyder LB, Milici FF, Slater M, Sun H, Strizhakova Y. Effects of alcohol advertising exposure on drinking among youth. *Arch Pediatr Adolesc Med*. 2006;160:(1),18-24.
- Pasch KE, Komro K.A., Perry CL, Hearst MO, Farbaksh, K.. Outdoor alcohol advertising near schools: what does it advertise and how is it related to intentions and use of alcohol among young adolescents? *J Stud Alcohol Drugs*. 2007;68:(4),587-96.
- Pagkatipunan PMN. Alcohol Consumption of University Students in the Metro Manila Area (Part 1). 2013. Unpublished.
- Hurtz S, Henriksen L, Wang Y, Feighery E, Fortmann S. The relationship between exposure to alcohol advertising in stores, owning alcohol promotional items, and adolescent alcohol use. *Alcohol Alcohol*. 2007;42:(2),143-9.
- Kuo M, Wechsler H, Greenberg P, Lee H. The marketing of alcohol to college students the role of low prices and special promotions. *Am J Prev Med*. 2003;25:(3),204-11.
- Campbell C, Hahn R, Elder R, et al. The effectiveness of limiting alcohol outlet density as a means of reducing excessive alcohol consumption and alcohol-related harms. *Am J Prev Med*. 2009;37:(6),556-69.
- Livingstone M, Chikritzhs T, Room R. Changing the density of alcohol outlets to reduce alcohol-related problems. *Drug Alcohol Rev*. 2007; 26:(5),557-66.
- Young R, Macdonald L, Ellaway A. Associations between proximity and density of local alcohol outlets and alcohol use among Scottish adolescents. *Health Place*, 2013;19:(100),124-30.
- The Task Force on Community Preventive Services. Recommendations for reducing excessive alcohol consumption and alcohol-related harms by limiting alcohol outlet density. *Am J Prev Med*. 2012;42:(4),428-9.
- Scribner RA, Mason KE, Simonsen NR, et al. An ecological analysis of alcohol-outlet density and campus-reported violence at 32 U.S. colleges. *J Stud Alcohol Drugs* 2010;71:(2),184-91.
- Wechsler H, Lee JE, Hall J, Wagenaar AC, Lee Hang. Second hand effects of student alcohol use reported by neighbors of colleges: the role of alcohol outlets. *Soc Sci Med*. 2002;55:(2002),425-35.