

Alcohol health promotion does not occur in a vacuum:

*How students construct and manage risk when confronted
with anti-alcohol messages*

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***#studentsandalcohol
#alcoholimpact***



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Communicating the risks of alcohol consumption

- Young adults at an increased susceptibility to alcohol related harm (ONS, 2017)
- **Traditional approach...**
 - Reduce consumption via attitude change
 - “Cheap” prevention strategy
- **“Consumption guidelines and consequences are well publicised”** (Buykx et al. 2018)
- **Limited evidence for their effectiveness**
 - Few quality experiments



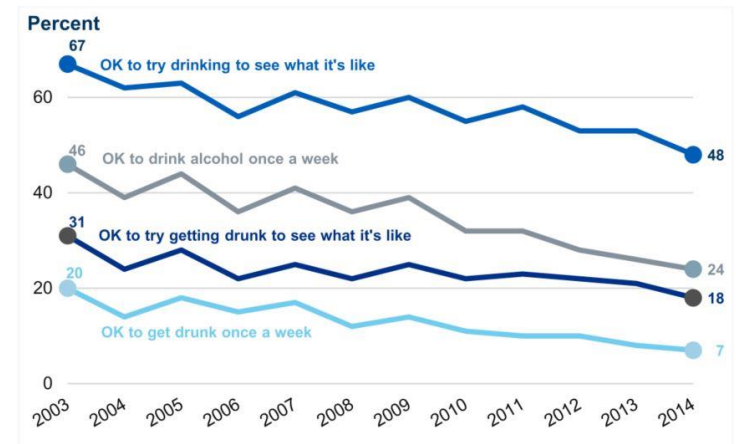
Experiments examining warning effectiveness

- **Brown et al. (2015)**
 - No main effect of warnings on alcohol seeking
 - Warnings reduced *heavier* drinkers' negative implicit attitudes
- **Stautz & Marteau (2016)**
 - Warnings reduced alcohol urge
 - Effect was mediated by negative affect, but not arousal
- **Stautz et al. (2017)**
 - No main effect on alcohol consumption
 - Consumption indirectly reduced via negative affect, but not arousal
 - No “boomerang effects”



Is this good?

- **Potential precedent for alcohol labelling**
 - Warnings that are close in physical and temporal proximity
- **But... Mixed trends regarding alcohol consumption in young people**
 - Aforementioned overall decline in consumption
 - Secondary school pupils' attitudes to drinking are decreasing (NHS, 2017)
 - 70% of young adults don't believe that they drink too much (YouGov, 2017)



Some considerations...

- **“Tension” between students’ competing interests**
 - Young teenagers expect to drink frequently as they get older due to culture (Davies, 2016).
 - Alcohol consumed for social, enhancement, conformity and coping reasons (YouGov, 2017)
- **Alcohol warnings could be “over-ridden”**
 - By alcohol specific motivations
 - Imitation of peers (e.g. Larsen et al. 2009) or competing cues (e.g. Kersbergen & Field, 2017)
- **Or warning effectiveness might decline over time**
 - “Advertising wearout”
 - Active mitigation of risk

How students “manage” risk

- **Re-formulate “dangerous” drinking**
 - Re-defining binge drinking (e.g. Guise & Gill, 2007)
 - Portraying as routine (Hebden et al. 2015) or light hearted (Guise & Gill, 2007)
 - Danger as being out of control (Chainey & Stephens, 2014) and risk managed (Hebden et al. 2015)
- **Managing identity**
 - Othering (Thompson & Kumar, 2011)
 - Switching between subject positions (Thompson & Kumar, 2011)
 - Gendered identities (see Chainey & Stephens, 2014; Conroy & de Visser, 2013)
- **Presenting narratives (as part of identity formation)**
 - Anticipatory pleasure and retrospective bonding (Brown & Gregg, 2012)
 - Reconstruction of negative occurrences into pleasurable and humorous stories both offline (e.g. Guise & Gill, 2007) and online (Hebden et al. 2015)

Our study

- **Aim**
 - How people attribute meaning to individual alcohol warnings
 - How they (discursively) manage their own risky consumption in response to (warning-based) challenge
- **Design**
 - 20 friendship focus groups
- **(Qualitative) Epistemological framework**
 - Discourse analysis (*action-oriented, specific and performative*: Edwards, 2006)
 - Distinction between alcohol prevention and “everyday” discourses (Elmeland & Kolind, 2012)

Implications

- More information regarding **ecological validity** of warnings and **complexity of responses** to them
- Contribute to knowledge regarding **long-term** and **contextual** effectiveness of warnings
- More detailed knowledge regarding responses to specific **message themes**



Thanks for listening!



Title	Duration (seconds)	Message content	Perceived effectiveness (Stautz et al. 2016)	Hyperlink
Know your limits (Male)	39	Injury, social consequences	6.68	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mo_49X7B53o&index=5&list=PLE7F66D3307CF5C5B
Tumour	40	Long-term health effects	5.90	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F0yH_5_tFqQ
Who is in control	69	Short-term health effects, social consequences	5.57	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wFXvh9xrBzk
Know your limits (Female)	40	Injury, social consequences	5.06	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HAMl1MJECZ4&list=PLE7F66D3307CF5C5B&index=6

Alcohol messaging and risk

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