

From Packaging to Promotion: Understanding Public Support for Alcohol Policy in Australia

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Introduction: Policies that regulate promotional alcohol marketing and alcohol packaging have potential to reduce consumption and related harms. Public support is a key facilitator of policy implementation and adoption; however, research examining public support for alcohol marketing and packaging policies in Australia is limited. This study investigated levels and predictors of support for six different alcohol policy proposals.

Methods: An online survey was administered to Australian adults who regularly (at least twice per month) drink alcohol (N = 3310). Participants indicated the extent to which they agreed with six alcohol-related policies. Descriptive statistics examined levels of support for each policy, and logistic regression identified predictors of increased policy support.

Results: Support ranged from 40% for cancer warning labels to 68% for prohibiting imagery on packaging that appeals to children. Being female, drinking at low-risk levels, and living in metropolitan areas were generally associated with higher policy support, with some variation according to policy type. Older participants typically favoured policies restricting alcohol promotion, while younger people were more supportive of policies providing health information.

Discussions and Conclusions: Support for public health policies varies widely according to both individual and policy characteristics. Building public awareness of the benefits of regulating alcohol marketing remains a priority.

Implications on communities, practice, policy and/or First Nations communities:

Strong support for limiting packaging that appeals to children suggests these measures may be most feasible. Advocacy to build support for less popular policies (e.g. cancer warning labels) should consider demographic differences and tailor strategies accordingly.

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