[GB] Ofcom Orders Review of Amount of Alcohol Advertising on Television

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On 24 May 2013 Ofcom ordered a review of the amount of alcohol advertising on television, after it emerged that children are increasingly watching reality programmes, such as: Britain's Got Talent, X-Factor, and I'm A Celebrity, Get Me Out of Here, which can show such advertisements under current rules.

The existing guidelines ban adverts from being aired during shows that have a particular appeal to the under 18s. But research carried out for the broadcasting regulator reveals that children saw an average 3.2 alcohol adverts per week in 2011 - an increase of 18% on 2007 when they saw 2.7 per week.

The kind of programmes that children watch has changed during those years and they also tend to watch later in the evenings - so that much of the television that under-18s now view is aimed at an adult audience. They also tend to watch more on multi-channel TV stations that are allowed to carry more minutes of advertising per hour.

Figures suggest that in 2011 a child aged 4-15 watched, on average, 227 commercials each week and 3.2 of these were for alcohol products. The top programmes watched by 4-9-year-olds where alcohol could have been advertised were: Britain's Got Talent, The X Factor and The X Factor Results.

Following the publication of the government's Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy, the advertising code that was drawn up by the CAP (Committees for Advertising Practice) was strengthened in 2005 in order to limit the appeal of alcohol ads to children and ensure they did not link alcohol consumption with youth culture, sex or violent behaviour.

But as a result of this latest research, Ofcom has asked the regulators, the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA), which ensures compliance with advertising rules, and the Broadcast Committee of Advertising Practice (BCAP), which keeps the rules under review, to assess whether the current curbs on alcohol advertising are still effective. Preliminary recommendations from BCAP will be set out in October 2013; these will cover broadcasting TV advertising only.

Ofcom: Children and young people's exposure to alcohol advertising 2007-2011

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http://stakeholders.ofcom.org.uk/binaries/research/tv-research/1100204/Alcohol_Report_2013.pdf

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