

One in five songs "advertises" alcohol

5th October, 2013



The songs young people listen to could be encouraging them to drink more alcohol. This is the conclusion of a study into the extent to which lyrics

contain references to drinking. Researchers from the John Moores University in Liverpool, England assert that public health warnings on liquor may be of diminishing value because of the prevalence of terms surrounding alcohol in pop songs. The study found that one in five songs in the UK music charts contains references to intoxicating beverages. This figure is double that from a decade ago. They also found that songs from 1981 contained relatively few references to alcohol. John Moores attributed some of the rise to an influx of US-imported songs.

Researchers said the exposure of young people to alcohol in the media is "a major concern". Professor Karen Hughes warned that references to alcohol are a "form of advertising and marketing for alcoholic products." She said: "Public health concerns are already focused on the impacts of alcohol advertising on the drinking behaviours of young people, yet the growing reference to alcohol in popular music could mean that positive, alcohol-promoting messages are reaching much larger audiences." Dr Hughes added: "Health and other professionals should be vigilant to ensure that popular music does not become a medium for reinforcing and extending cultures of intoxication and alcohol-related harm."

Sources: *Telegraph.com* / *Science Daily.com*

Writing

Songs that contain references to alcohol and other drugs should not be played on radios or television. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

alcohol / lyrics / public health warnings / references / music charts / intoxicating / major concern / marketing / positive message / professionals / alcohol-related harm

True / False

- a) Young people may be drinking more alcohol because of pop songs. T / F
- b) Pop songs lessen the impact of public health warnings about alcohol. T / F
- c) Around 10 per cent of songs in Britain's music charts mention alcohol. T / F
- d) There were more references to alcohol in songs from 1981. T / F
- e) A professor said songs can advertising and marketing tools for alcohol. T / F
- f) The professor said songs give alcohol a positive image. T / F
- g) The professor said the drinks industry should be more vigilant. T / F
- h) The professor said songs do well to limit alcohol-related harm. T / F

Synonym Match

- | | |
|------------------|------------------|
| 1. encouraging | a. strengthening |
| 2. conclusion | b. words |
| 3. lyrics | c. watchful |
| 4. prevalence | d. markets |
| 5. influx | e. coaxing |
| 6. impacts | f. drunkenness |
| 7. audiences | g. opinion |
| 8. vigilant | h. flood |
| 9. reinforcing | i. influences |
| 10. intoxication | j. commonness |

Discussion – Student A

- a) How dangerous a drug is alcohol?
- b) Haven't singers always sung about alcohol?
- c) Should singers be more responsible about their lyrics?
- d) How can governments limit the effect of these songs on young people?
- e) Do public health warnings about alcohol work?
- f) Is one in five songs a lot?
- g) Should songs have ratings on them like movies do?
- h) Should songwriters write more about love and peace?

Phrase Match

- | | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. the extent to which lyrics | a. young people to alcohol |
| 2. the prevalence of terms | b. larger audiences |
| 3. intoxicating | c. relatively few references |
| 4. songs from 1981 contained | d. contain references to drinking |
| 5. an influx | e. related harm |
| 6. the exposure of | f. surrounding alcohol |
| 7. a form of advertising | g. of US-imported songs |
| 8. the drinking behaviours | h. and marketing |
| 9. reaching much | i. beverages |
| 10. intoxication and alcohol- | j. of young people |

Discussion – Student B

- What harm does alcohol do to society?
- How would the world be different if alcohol was banned?
- Do you think alcohol companies will start paying singers to mention their products?
- What responsibility do pop singers have to be positive role models?
- How can society ensure pop music does not spread a positive message about alcohol?
- Is alcohol the worst subject matter of pop songs?
- Are people over-reacting to studies like the one in the article?
- What questions would you like to ask Dr Hughes?

Spelling

- neiaconurgg them to drink more
- ilcrsy contain references to drinking
- public health warnings on oiqlur
- the vlncpaeree of terms
- intoxicating eaeresgub
- elarlevtiy few
- the esxroepu of young people
- health rccneso
- fdecous on the impacts
- much larger anescdoui
- professionals should be iiavtgi
- a medium for inrcgfrnieo and extending

Answers – Synonym Match

1. e	2. g	3. b	4. j	5. h
6. i	7. d	8. c	9. a	10. f

Role Play

Role A – Alcohol

You think songs about alcohol are the worst for young people. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them things that are wrong with their songs. Also, tell the others which is the next worse of these (and why): drugs, sex or xenophobia.

Role B – Drugs

You think songs about drugs are the worst for young people. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them things that are wrong with their songs. Also, tell the others which is the next worse of these (and why): alcohol, sex or xenophobia.

Role C – Sex

You think songs about sex are the worst for young people. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them things that are wrong with their songs. Also, tell the others which is the next worse of these (and why): drugs, alcohol or xenophobia.

Role D – Xenophobia

You think songs about xenophobia are the worst for young people. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them things that are wrong with their songs. Also, tell the others which is the next worse of these (and why): drugs, sex or alcohol.

Speaking - Music

Rank these and share your rankings with your partner. Put the best at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- | | |
|--------|---------------|
| • rap | • jazz |
| • folk | • blues |
| • rock | • heavy metal |
| • soul | • techno |

Answers – True False

a	T	b	T	c	F	d	F	e	T	f	T	g	F	h	F
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.