



Exposure to alcohol advertisement affects drinking behaviour through deliberative (attentive) processing but not through automatic (pre-attentive) processing

cognitive processes
drinking
alcohol advertisement

The present study investigated whether exposure to alcohol advertisement might affect drinking behaviour through automatic (pre-attentive) - or deliberative (attentive) processing, or both. It also examined whether the nature of alcohol advertisement effects differ between light and heavy drinkers of alcohol. In addition, we studied to what extent automatic and deliberative alcohol related processing could predict future drinking behaviour. Therefore, automatic and deliberative alcohol related processing were measured in light and heavy drinkers of alcohol following exposure to a block of alcohol and soft-drink advertisements. Prospective drinking behaviour was assessed one month later through a telephone interview.

The results indicated that acute alcohol advertisement exposure does not affect automatic (pre-attentive-) level alcohol related processing, but does affect deliberative (attentive-) level processing in male light drinkers. Furthermore, deliberative alcohol related processing predicted prospective drinking behaviour, while automatic processing did not. It is concluded that acute alcohol advertisement exposure influences alcohol related processing through the deliberative re-evaluation of validity tags in male light drinkers. Further, deliberative alcohol related processing might play a role in the development of addiction and hence may be a suitable target for prevention.

A recommendation that follows from this work is that, if these results can be replicated, preventive interventions targeting the deliberative processing of alcohol advertisement in light drinkers could be used to reduce the drinking promoting effects of alcohol advertisement.

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Witteman, J., de Sousa Fernandes Perna, E.B., Cousijn, J., De Bruijn, A., Ramaekers, J. G., Theunissen, E., Kuypers, K., & Wiers, R. (2014): *The malleability of automatic and deliberative alcohol related processes by alcohol advertisement among light and heavy drinkers: Relationship with prospective drinking*. Addiction and Lifestyles in Contemporary Europe: Reframing Addictions Project (ALICE RAP): [Deliverable 11.3](#) (part II, study 1)