



**RESEARCH SUMMARY**  
Date Compiled: September 2025

**Key takeaways from included research:**

- An Australian study analyzed 1,848 Instagram and TikTok posts to examine alcohol-related user-generated content (UGC). Results showed that over half of posts featured alcohol—often branded—and most expressed positive drinking experiences or pro-alcohol sentiment, with only 2% showing negative consequences. Many posts appeared to involve undisclosed marketing, highlighting the need for stronger regulations and transparency to reduce young people’s exposure to covert alcohol promotion.
- A study examined alcohol advertising on popular television channels among children and adolescents in Beijing, China. Of 13,864 total ads, 321 (6.0%) were alcohol-related, with significantly higher exposure during peak viewing times, especially between 9:00 and 9:59 pm. All alcohol ads used at least one marketing strategy, most commonly brand benefit claims. Findings show that alcohol advertising exceeded regulatory limits, suggesting stronger regulations are needed to reduce youth exposure.
- In 63 patients with alcohol use disorder, gut microbiome changes were tracked during withdrawal. Researchers found that bacterial load and butyrate production capacity increased, while inflammation markers and alcohol craving decreased. The microbiome shifted closer to that of healthy controls, suggesting recovery toward a healthier state. Specific microbial changes were linked to craving, supporting the gut–brain connection in alcohol dependence.

## **ALCOHOL PROMOTION VIA USER-GENERATED CONTENT ON INSTAGRAM AND TIKTOK: A CONTENT ANALYSIS**

**September 2025**

**Introduction:** Alcohol-related user-generated content (UGC)—created by influencers and peers—appears to play a central role in shaping young people's alcohol-related attitudes and behaviours. However, the nature and extent to which UGC facilitates the promotion of alcohol remains under-examined. There is limited evidence on how alcohol companies utilise social media platforms to engage users and incentivise the promotion of their brands and products. Therefore, this study aimed to examine the nature and extent of alcohol promotion via UGC on Instagram and TikTok posts.

**Methods:** This content analysis examined 1848 public user-generated Instagram (n = 1148) and TikTok (n = 700) posts, focusing on major alcohol tags and hashtags over a 7-year period. Posts were systematically coded for account type, sentiment, product placement and indicators of marketing (e.g., sponsorship or undisclosed marketing).

**Results:** Of the posts analysed, 37% originated from influencers accounts. Five percent were identified as sponsored content, while 10% showed characteristics of undisclosed marketing. Half featured alcohol as the main focus, with 64% including branded products. Most posts (78%) expressed pro-brand sentiment, 53% showed positive drinking experiences and 20% portrayed camaraderie. Only 2% contained anti-brand sentiment or depicted negative consequences of alcohol consumption.

**Discussion and Conclusions:** The disparity between disclosed (5%) and suspected undisclosed promotional content (10%) highlights transparency and regulatory issues. UGC predominantly carried a celebratory tone, reinforcing a pro-alcohol narrative that influences young users' attitudes towards drinking. Stronger regulatory frameworks, independent monitoring and content transparency tools are urgently needed to mitigate young people's exposure to covert alcohol promotion.

**Source:** Crocetti A, Lister N, Martino F, Browne J, Backholer K, Miller P, Pristov EJ, Dunn M. Alcohol Promotion via User-Generated Content on Instagram and TikTok: A Content Analysis. *Drug Alcohol Rev.* 2025 Sep 2. doi: 10.1111/dar.70027. Epub ahead of print. PMID: 40892636.

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/40892636/>

## **ESTIMATED EXPOSURE TO TELEVISED ALCOHOL ADVERTISEMENTS AMONG CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS**

**July 2025**

**Importance:** Alcohol advertising on television in China has the potential to target children and adolescents with harmful content. Understanding the extent of this advertising is critical for informing and improving current regulatory approaches.

**Objective:** To measure the exposure of alcohol advertisements on television channels popular among children and adolescents in Beijing, China.

**Design, Setting, and Participants:** This cross-sectional study of television advertisements used the 4 most popular television channels for viewers aged 3 to 18 years (2 children's channels and 2 general channels) in Beijing and accessed advertisements recorded from October 19, 2020, to January 17, 2021. Television advertisements were recorded during 4 randomly selected weekdays and 4 randomly selected weekend days (from 6:00 am to 11:59 pm). Data were analyzed from October 1, 2023, to December 31, 2024.

**Exposures:** Television alcohol advertisements, with food and nonalcoholic beverages (F&B) advertisements classified as not permitted in marketing to children included as comparison.

**Main Outcomes and Measures:** Primary outcomes included frequency and distribution of alcohol advertisements, rate per channel-hour, and potential exposure during peak viewing times (PVT). Secondary outcomes included comparison with F&B advertisements classified as not permitted based on the World Health Organization Western Pacific Region Office Nutrient Profile Model integrated with the International Network for Food and Obesity/Non-communicable Diseases Research, Monitoring and Action Support (INFORMAS) food classification system and analysis of 6 marketing strategies.

**Results:** Among 13 864 total advertisements included in the analysis, 5368 were food advertisements. Among the food advertisements, 321 (6.0%; 95% CI, 5.4%-6.7%) were alcohol advertisements and 2001 (37.3%; 95% CI, 36.0%-38.6%) were F&B advertisements classified as not permitted. On general channels, a mean (SD) of 1.1 (1.7) alcohol advertisements per channel-hour were identified, with significantly higher rates during PVT compared with non-PVT (2.0 [2.4] vs 0.7 [0.9] per channel-hour;  $P < .001$ ). The highest rate occurred between 9:00 and 9:59 pm, with a mean (SD) of 3.7 (2.8) advertisements per channel-hour and an estimated mean (SD) of 14 303 014 (11 659 096) impressions among children and adolescents. All 321 alcohol advertisements (100%; 95% CI, 98.9%-100%) and 1997 F&B advertisements classified as not permitted (99.8%; 95% CI, 99.5%-99.9%) used at least 1 marketing strategy, predominantly brand benefit claims, which were used in 307 alcohol advertisements (95.6%; 95% CI, 92.8%-97.4%) and 1915 F&B advertisements classified as not permitted (95.7%; 95% CI, 94.7%-96.5%).

**Conclusions and Relevance:** In this cross-sectional study of television advertising, alcohol advertisements on general channels exceeded regulatory limits, especially during PVT. These findings suggest that current regulations allow exposure of children and adolescents to alcohol marketing and should be strengthened.

**Source:** Tang, Y., Lei, N., Hu, D., Liang, K., Liu, Y., Karupaiah, T., ... & Zhang, J. (2025). Estimated Exposure to Televised Alcohol Advertisements Among Children and Adolescents. *JAMA Network Open*, 8(7), e2521819-e2521819. <https://doi.org/10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2025.21819>

## **THE EFFECT OF ALCOHOL WITHDRAWAL THERAPY ON GUT MICROBIOTA IN ALCOHOL USE DISORDER AND ITS LINK TO INFLAMMATION AND CRAVING**

**August 2025**

**Background:** Alcohol use disorder (AUD) is linked to changes in the function and composition of the human gut microbiome (GM). The GM affects inflammation by producing anti-inflammatory molecules such as short-chain fatty acids (SCFA), in particular butyrate, which are linked to appetite regulation, a mechanism involved in alcohol craving. This study investigates changes in GM composition and functional capacity to produce SCFA during alcohol withdrawal and their link to inflammation and craving.

**Methods:** Sixty-three patients (mean age 48, SD = 12) with AUD were enrolled. We collected stool (n = 63) and blood (n = 48) during the first 48 h (timepoint A) of withdrawal therapy and between Days 10–14 (timepoint B). Microbiota were analyzed using shotgun metagenomics along with bacterial load determinations. TNF- $\alpha$ , IL-6, IL-8, and IL-10 were measured in plasma.

**Results:** Bacterial diversity (species richness, Shannon Index) did not change significantly throughout withdrawal, while overall bacterial load increased. Abundances of several taxa changed, and the overall community composition during withdrawal was approaching those of healthy controls; the potential to synthesize butyrate, a key SCFA, increased. However, it remained at lower levels compared with controls. Both diversity parameters correlated with cell concentrations and the butyrate pathway at baseline. The latter was negatively associated with IL-6 at baseline. IL-8 and IL-10 levels decreased significantly during withdrawal, as did craving, which was linked to abundance alterations of six species and IL-8.

**Conclusions:** Alcohol withdrawal affected GM composition and increased concentration of the butyrate pathway along with overall bacterial load. Changes in bacterial composition and the butyrate production capacity demonstrate a shift toward healthier microbiota during withdrawal therapy. Changes in some species and IL-8 were linked to alcohol craving, replicating findings of previous studies. Our study adds new findings helping to understand the microbiome–gut–brain axis.

**Source:** Proskynitopoulos, P. J., Woltemate, S., Rhein, M., Böke, I., Molks, J., Schröder, S., ... & Vital, M. (2025). The effect of alcohol withdrawal therapy on gut microbiota in alcohol use disorder and its link to inflammation and craving. *Alcohol: Clinical and Experimental Research*.  
<https://doi.org/10.1111/acer.70128>