



MICAP RECAP

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Alcohol-tobacco addiction link further documented by new research



Alcohol addiction's link to tobacco addiction is such that America's premier treatment center, the Hazelden Foundation, now meets this issue with concurrent treatment programs which tackle alcohol, nicotine and other drugs at the same time.

Hazelden points out that quitting tobacco is not a requirement for quitting drinking, noting that people can achieve a satisfying sobriety, even if they continue to smoke, but the nation's leading rehab center points to research which links tobacco to alcohol addiction. Studies indicate that:

- Between 80 and 95 percent of alcoholics smoke cigarettes, a rate that is more than three times that for the general American population.
- Nearly 70 percent of alcoholics are heavy smokers (i.e., smoke more than one pack of cigarettes per day).
- Heavier drinkers puff their cigarettes more and draw in more smoke with each puff.

Now, according to *New York Times* reporter Eric Nagourney, researchers have discovered another link between drinking and smoking. Sometimes when former smokers go out drinking, by the end of the evening they are hooked on cigarettes again.

Why? Researchers say that in part, it may come down to simple brain chemistry.

A new study has found that alcohol, even in very small amounts, appears to enhance the pleasurable effects of nicotine.

At the same time, the researchers say, nicotine may counteract some of the effects of alcohol, like drowsiness.

"It may be kind of a balancing act in the brain—

that you're taking one substance to balance the effects of another substance," said Dr. Jed E. Rose of the Nicotine Research Program at Duke University and the lead author of the study, which appears in the current issue of *Nicotine & Tobacco Research*.

The link between alcohol and tobacco is strong and complex. According to the researchers, as many as 90 percent of alcoholics smoke. And alcoholism is much more likely to occur among smokers than among nonsmokers, they said. But while there has been a long-standing cultural marriage between drinking and smoking, scientists have had trouble explaining the physiological relationship. Some have theorized that alcohol lowers the ability of nicotine receptors in the brain to respond to the drug, creating a desire for more cigarettes.

While this may, in fact, occur in some receptors, the new study reports, over all, alcohol makes nicotine more pleasurable.

DRINKING . . . has become more common among teenage girls than boys, according to survey data from the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA), and a new study suggests one possible explanation: an increase in alcohol advertising reaching teenage girls.

The study, published in *The Archives of Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine*, said drinking by all teenagers had increased in recent years. Twice as many students under 18 said they had tried alcohol in 1999 than in 1995, and more girls than boys said in 2002 that they had been drinking at least once in the prior month.

The study cited industry statements showing that alcohol advertising had increased steadily in the same period, especially for low-alcohol drinks such as wine coolers and alcoholic iced teas.

To determine how much of such advertising teenagers were being exposed to, the researchers, led by Dr. David H. Jernigan of Georgetown University, analyzed the ads placed in 103 national magazines in 2001 and 2002. They compared the magazines' estimates of the number of readers in different age categories with the populations as a whole in those age groups.

What they found, Dr. Jernigan said, is that a larger percentage of girls from age 12 to 20 were exposed to alcohol ads than were women over 21, or even women 21 to 34, the age group usually described as the prime target of alcohol marketing.

The biggest change from 2001 to 2002 came in ads for the low-alcohol drinks, the article said. Girls' exposure to such ads jumped 216 percent, while boys' exposure went up 46 percent.



NOT TO WORRY . . . if your progress on the freeway is stop-and-go due to construction or an accident or if you are tense from too many miles behind the wheel. There are proven strategies to calm the nerves and ease the pain, according to *Detroit News* health writer Maureen McDonald.

In a recent piece in Michigan's largest newspaper, she outlined strategies to address such problems that involved breathing, stretching and other exercises drivers and passengers could utilize.

A strategy she did not mention is popping a Bud Light or sipping a mixed drink to calm the nerves. Of course this might relieve the stress, but it would be not only dangerous but illegal as well. Right?

Well, not exactly . . . Way down yonder in New Orleans, folks not only drink while driving, they do it almost legally, according to a story by Mary Foster in the *Lansing State Journal*.

She told how each day, workers leaving chemical plants and oil refineries jam the combination gas stations and convenience stores, not for gasoline, but heading straight to tubs of beer, rum and vodka drinks sticking up from beds of ice.

Big Boy in Howell petitions to add liquor to the menu

“I liken this to Joe Camel and the tobacco industry. This has national implications.”

By **BEN SCHMITT**
FREE PRESS STAFF WRITER

ROBERT HAMMOND, director of the Alcohol Research Information Service in Lansing, who plans on speaking against the plan.

If a Big Boy restaurant in Howell gets its wish, costumers soon will be able to order a scotch on the rocks with a Slim Jim sandwich.

That’s right, Big Boy—the classic family restaurant whose mascot is a chubby 6-year-old boy in droopy, checkered overalls—wants to become the first of its kind to open a full bar. An application with the Michigan Liquor Control Commission is pending.

“We’ve had a lot of good comments as far as customers coming and wanting to enjoy a burger and a beer,” said the Howell restaurant’s general manager, Stephen Mourad, son of owner Edmond Mourad.



PATRICIA BECK / Detroit Free Press

A Big Boy in Howell is petitioning to serve liquor.

Not everyone is happy.

Robert Hammond, director of the Alcohol Research Information Service in Lansing, said Monday he doesn’t want to mix alcohol and the family image projected by Big Boy.

“The alcohol industry, in all sorts of ways, subtly solicits underage drinkers,” Hammond said. “I liken this to Joe Camel and the tobacco industry. This has national implications.”

Big Boy, home of the double-decker hamburger, is headquartered in Warren and has 140 restaurants in Michigan, where 3 million people eat every month.

Many restaurants stock their shelves with Big Boy products such as bobbleheads, piggy banks, pies, salad dressings and coffee.

Big Boy’s Chief Executive Officer Tony Michaels said the Mourad family owns the Howell restaurant and pays royalty fees for the franchise rights.

Michaels said the liquor license is only a test case and there are no immediate plans to serve liquor at other restaurants.

“This is a very controlled and very long and drawn out test,” Michaels said. “We’ll see how it does.”

Michaels said he has had a lot of calls from both sides of the issue and takes them seriously.

“The pros say that other restaurants do it,” he said. “The cons say ‘Big Boy is the one place that is a true-blue family restaurant. Why change now?’”

Michaels added: “The reactions are interesting. People consider Big Boy their own and we have to be careful with that.”

Michaels pointed out that Big Boy restaurants in Petoskey and Gaylord serve beer and wine, but “they don’t promote it heavily.”

A manager at the Petoskey restaurant, Tim Dickinson, said it has had a beer and wine license for about five years.

“You get your occasional person who says ‘I can’t believe you guys have beer and wine,’ but you kind of have to keep up with the times,” Dickinson said.

Hammond said that he plans to testify against the license at an upcoming Liquor Control Commission hearing.

“Other restaurants, like Applebee’s and Bennigan’s, serve alcohol, but they don’t use this kind of a ‘kid-friendly, family image’ in their promotions,” he said. “That’s my concern. I want a condition of the license to be that they can no longer use a statue of a 6-year-old kid.”

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"Everybody's too hot and thirsty to wait until they get home for a cold beer," said Chuck Johnson, 34, who stopped with a friend to stock up for the drive home. "I get two for the road. I've been doing it for years and I'm not about to stop."

Although drivers are forbidden to have open containers of alcohol, Louisiana is one of 13 states where passengers are allowed to drink. Police say that allows drinking drivers to simply hand off a drink to avoid a ticket.

State legislators hope that changes in August, when a new law takes effect banning passengers, too, from drinking. But police expect the new law to be broken regularly in this land of drive-through daiquiri shops, go cups and all-night bars.

The 13 States

The 13 states that Mothers Against Drunk Driving says don't have laws forbidding possession of an open alcoholic beverage container and forbidding consumption of alcohol in the passenger area of a motor vehicle:

- | | |
|---------------|-----------------|
| ➤ Alaska | ➤ Missouri |
| ➤ Arkansas | ➤ Montana |
| ➤ Colorado | ➤ Tennessee |
| ➤ Connecticut | ➤ Virginia |
| ➤ Delaware | ➤ West Virginia |
| ➤ Indiana | ➤ Wyoming |
| ➤ Mississippi | |

"In Louisiana we drink to celebrate births and drink to mourn deaths. We drink early and we drink late. We drink all day long for any reason. And an awful lot of people keep drinking in a car," said Ronnie Jones, a former state trooper who now teaches criminal law at Tulane.

According to figures compiled by Mothers Against Drunk Driving, 48 percent of the 938 fatal accidents in Louisiana in 2000 (454) were alcohol related. Only six states had higher percentages, and all of them except Texas had fewer total accidents.

"We're always right up there on top," said Cathy Childers, Louisiana executive director of MADD. "It's so sad to drive up to a light and see people in

the next car drinking alcohol. Maybe it will be one small step toward raising children who don't grow up thinking it's all right to drink and drive."



SUMMER IS HERE . . . and in these lazy, hazy, crazy days teens are out of school and faced with more time on their hands. For some, that may mean an opportunity to earn extra money as employers offer opportunities for either part- or full-time workers, but for others, the extra leisure time can result in picking up habits such as smoking marijuana, and downing alcohol, according to a new report from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

The National Survey on Drug Use and Health found that June and July were the most popular time for teens to try marijuana, with about 6,300 new users a day during these months. That compares with about 4,700 new users a day during other times of the year.

In addition, the survey found that first-time use of alcohol and cigarettes also increases during the summer, when many teens are less supervised and, in the current economy, having trouble finding jobs. According to the findings:

- Youth initiation of alcohol use was highest during December, January, June, and July
- Youth initiation of marijuana use and cigarette use were highest during June and July
- The percentages of marijuana, cigarette, and alcohol initiates increased between the spring (April and May) and the summer (June and July)

DINNINGTON, ENGLAND . . . When David Walker left home for the local pub, he had in mind a pleasant evening with darts and fellowship with friends.

But sometime during his consumption of an estimated 15 pints of Guinness, he got into an

argument that so angered him that he left for home, where he loaded a sawed-off shotgun, which he stuffed in his belt and headed back to the bar.

However, David didn't quite make it back to the pub, as the gun accidentally discharged on the way.

According to Reuters, Mr. Walker has now been released from the local hospital, minus the family jewels. He is still facing a fine and possible jail time for illegally carrying a concealed weapon.

PHYSICIANS . . . are well aware of the effects of alcohol, not only on a person's physical skills, but on one's judgment as well, but a study we earlier reported from the *British Medical Journal* revealed that a surprising number of doctors admitted to drinking while they were on call.

The researchers found:

- 24% of the doctors consumed alcohol while on call
- 64% of the doctors said they encountered doctors whom they believed were drinking when on call
- 27% knew of doctors who were impaired by alcohol while on duty

The report, "Doctors' Perceptions of Drinking Alcohol While on Call," was published in the September 2002 issue of the *British Medical Journal*.

This study came to mind when the *Lansing State Journal* (Michigan) recently reported on a bill introduced in the Michigan Legislature which would establish drinking limits for doctors, dentists, nurses and other licensed health care professionals.

State Representative Michael Sak of Grand Rapids, who said a dentist had given his sister, 21-year-old Michele Rose Sak, an overdose of Valium and nitrous oxide, stopping her heart and causing her death, sponsored the proposal.

The dentist continued to practice while the case was under investigation and eventually the family made a settlement with the dentist's insurance carrier. Eventually, the dentist's license was revoked, but criminal charges were never filed.



Sak sponsored bills that would make it a misdemeanor for any of the state's 375,000 dentists, doctors, nurses or other health care professionals to be under the influence of alcohol or other drugs while treating patients. Offenders could face a \$1,000 fine and 90 days in jail.

It is already illegal to prescribe a medication while intoxicated, but the Sak proposal would expand the law to prohibit engaging in health care practice while having a blood alcohol content of 0.05 percent.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Michigan Interfaith Council on Alcohol Problems seeks to:

1. Broaden the awareness of the religious community, public officials and the Michigan Public to the destructive consequences of alcohol, other drugs, tobacco and gambling, and offer positive solutions.
2. Educate the Michigan Public for responsible controls in the areas of alcohol, other drugs, tobacco and gambling, and
3. Alert and mobilize supporters to any public policy changes related to MICAP's mission.