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Pinkwashed alcohol products & promotions exposed in new study

Alcohol is a known & avoidable contributor to breast cancer

Alcohol Justice spotlights problems & dangers of pinkwashing

SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA (September 14, 2015) – A new study in the October issue of *Addiction* documents alcohol products promoted with pink ribbons, partnerships with breast cancer charities, and general terms such as “breast cancer research” or “cure.”

Hundreds of brands promote products with breast cancer awareness ribbons, and when companies that make products that contribute to cancer do so, it is called pinkwashing. Ironically, pinkwashed alcohol brands contribute to cancer risk in the name of research, treatment, and/or prevention. Pinkwashed drinks extend the potential to increase sales of a carcinogen by linking an iconic charitable cause and entire populations of women, including young women who may already drink at higher levels.

“Pinkwashed alcohol products and promotions under the breast cancer awareness credo devalue and undermine the vital work of cancer charities,” stated Sarah Mart, research director at Alcohol Justice and coauthor of the study. *“As a public health standard, breast cancer awareness should be clearly separate from alcohol marketing.”*

The evidence is clear: moderate and even low alcohol use is a leading risk factor for breast cancer, and 8% of breast cancer cases globally are attributable to alcohol.

“Alcohol is a major contributing cause of a wide range of social problems, types of trauma and chronic disease, including several types of cancer,” said Norman Giesbrecht, study coauthor and Senior Scientist Emeritus, Centre for Addiction & Mental Health in Toronto. *“An alliance between a breast cancer prevention charity and an alcohol producer confounds efforts to implement effective prevention strategies and may increase risky drinking among the most vulnerable.”*

“Big Alcohol’s pinkwashing is a deceptive, egregious, and exploitive cause-marketing practice that does more harm than good,” said Bruce Lee Livingston, Alcohol Justice Executive Director/CEO. *“Cancer charities need to reconsider any marketing partnerships and sponsorship relationships with alcohol brands. Local, state, and federal regulators must end this charade, in the honor of those who have fallen victim to alcohol-related disease.”*

Ms. Mart will present the study's findings and recommendations in October at the Global Alcohol Policy Conference in Edinburgh, Scotland; and in November at the American Public Health Association Annual Meeting in Chicago, Illinois.

Find the abstract for the article, ***Red flags on pinkwashed drinks: contradictions and dangers in marketing alcohol to prevent cancer*** at <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/add.13035/abstract>.

Watch a short video, or download the Alcohol Justice brief, ***Pinkwashed Drinks: Problems & Dangers*** at www.alcoholjustice.org.

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