

Study Finds Movies Feature More Alcohol and Less Tobacco



Depictions of drinking alcohol in movies increased between 1996 and 2009, while smoking scenes decreased, according to a new study.

Researchers studied the placement and prevalence of alcohol and tobacco products in 1,400 movies during that period. Smoking and tobacco products decreased 42.3 percent in youth-rated movies, and 85.4 percent in adult-rated movies during that time frame.

In contrast, alcohol brand product placement in youth-rated movies increased from 80 to 145 per year, an increase of 5.2 appearances annually.

The researchers report in *JAMA Pediatrics* that the decrease in smoking in movies can be attributed to the Master Settlement Agreement of 1998, which required tobacco companies to change their marketing practices and to fund anti-smoking advocacy organizations.

Experts disagree about how much alcohol and tobacco scenes in movies influence young people's behavior, *Time.com* reports. Some point out it often isn't known whether teens start drinking or smoking before or after seeing particular movies.

A study published last year found watching movies with scenes that feature alcohol consumption doubles the likelihood that teens will start drinking alcohol. The two-year study of more than 6,500 American kids, ages 10 to 14, also found that teens who are exposed to alcohol-fueled movies are more likely to progress to binge drinking (five or more drinks in a row).

A second study published last year, which included more than 16,000 European teens, suggested the amount of drinking children and teens see in movies may influence their own drinking habits.