

Consumption of sugar sweetened and other beverages among teens: Findings from telephone focus groups

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Presenter Disclosures:

Leah Rimkus

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No relationships to disclose.

Bridging the Gap

- A collaborative effort to assess the impacts of policies, programs and other environmental factors on a variety of adolescent health-related behaviors
- An RWJF initiative begun in 1997 with focus on adolescent alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use and related outcomes
- More recently expanded to include youth eating practices, physical activity, and weight outcomes
- Linked to the ongoing, NIDA-funded, Monitoring the Future study

impac**TEEN**

*A Policy Research Partnership
for Healthier Youth Behavior*

YES!

Youth,
Education,
& Society

Learning Objectives

- Describe the types of beverages that are commonly consumed by teenagers
- Identify differences in beverage consumption by age, gender, and locale type
- Describe factors that influence teens' beverage choices

Background

- Sugar-sweetened beverages (SSBs) and obesity
 - Between 1997 and 2002, per capita intake of caloric beverages doubled in the U.S. across all age groups.¹
 - An estimated 10-15% of total calories consumed by children and adolescents come from SSBs and fruit juices.²
 - SSB consumption is linked to greater calorie intake and obesity.
- IOM Recommendation
 - Implement a tax strategy to discourage consumption of foods and beverages that have minimal nutritional value, such as SSBs.
- CDC Recommendation
 - Communities should discourage consumption of SSBs.



ARE YOU POURING ON THE POUNDS?

DON'T DRINK YOURSELF FAT.

**Cut back on soda and other sugary beverages.
Go with water, seltzer or low-fat milk instead.**

NYC
Michael R. Bloomberg
Mayor

Department of
Health & Mental
Hygiene
Thomas Fara, M.D., M.P.H.,
Commissioner

Methods

- Computer-assisted telephone focus groups
 - Kahle Research Solutions Inc.
 - 12 focus groups with 5-10 participants in each
 - Up to 90 minutes in length
- Focus group objectives
 - Identify the places where teens go to eat and exercise in/around their communities
 - Understand differences in these behaviors by age, gender, and geography
 - Explore the types of foods and beverages that teens consume

Methods

- Nationwide recruitment through electronic flyers and purchased phone lists
- Selection criteria
 - 13-18 years old
 - English-speaking
 - Attends public school
- Stratification
 - Male/female
 - Urban/suburban/rural
 - Younger/older
- Parental consent obtained for those < 18 years
- Approved by UIC Institutional Review Board

Sample questions

- Walk me through a typical day of what you eat and drink, from when you wake up until when you go to bed.
- How often do you go to...
 - fast food restaurants
 - fast casual restaurants
 - full service restaurants
 - coffee shops and other places that sell coffee and pastries/donuts
 - general merchandise stores like Wal-Mart and Target
- What kind of food and drinks do you buy there?

Types of beverages consumed

- Mentioned most:

Soda, energy drinks, sweetened coffee drinks

- Mentioned somewhat:

Vitamin water, sports drinks, slushies, plain coffee, water

- Mentioned least:

Milk, flavored milk, juice, juice drinks, plain tea, sweetened tea, milk shakes, protein shakes, smoothies, diet drinks

Differences in beverages consumption by strata

Females	Males
Water Vitamin water Juice drinks	Sports drinks Milkshakes Plain coffee
Urban	Rural
Soda	Energy drinks Sports drinks
Older	Younger
Water Tea	Milk

Energy drinks

- *“...I drink [energy drinks] on a regular basis which is mainly the reason why I don’t have money for lunch. I like NOS. I especially love the 32-ounce Monsters.... I don’t know I’m diagnosed ADHD, so I don’t know, but it calms me down sort of, it helps me focus.”*
– Male, 13-15, suburban group

Energy drinks

- *“I get Monster. It’s a green energy drink and it has like taurine and ginseng in it or something. They have a can called the BFC, stands for Big F-ing Can. It’s huge and you can buy it for like five bucks and it will get you buzzed all day. It’s awesome. You can stay awake and study so hard....I’m sure it’s not good for you, but if you work out, whatever.”*
 - *Female, 16-18, urban group*

Coffee drinks

- *“If we stop on the way home, we usually stop for Starbucks and get that all the time. That’s our number one thing, especially in the morning, actually. I get a Grande White Mocha with caramel sauce or a Venti Iced Chai. I always get pumpkin loaf or a cream cheese Danish.”*
 - *Female, 16-18, urban group*

Factors influencing beverage choices MOST

- Taste

- *“I like the way [energy drinks] taste. If there was something more healthy, then I would drink that too. But usually, I like the way Rock Star tastes.” - Male, 16-18, suburban group*
- *“[Vitamin waters] go down good like water, not like soda.” - Female, 16-18, rural group*
- *“I have yet to acquire a taste for coffee, so I usually buy the stuff that tastes like candy.” - Male, 16-18, rural group*

Factors influencing beverage choices MOST

- Social influence
 - *“I actually go to Starbucks or a coffee house. It’s sort of a hang out.” - Male, 16-18, rural group*
 - *“My first period for my school is only two days a week, so a bunch of my friends, we normally go to Starbucks.” - Male, 16-18, suburban group*

Factors influencing beverage choices SOMEWHAT

- Cost

- *“Coffee? Yeah. You walk in the door and it’s like you see \$5.00 slip right out of your purse.” - Female, 16-18, rural group*
- *“My girlfriend buys popcorn and stuff, but I’ll only buy a Slurpee or something because I don’t like wasting money on something overpriced.” - Male, 16-18, urban group*

Factors influencing beverage choices **SOMEWHAT**

- Convenience

- *“My school is right next to all the stores and Starbucks so we just walk there because it’s just across the street.” – Female, 16-18, urban group*
- *“I don’t really eat breakfast because I rush to get ready for school. At school for lunch I eat a slushie and a bag of chips.” – Female, 13-15, suburban group*

Factors influencing beverage choices SOMEWHAT

- Physiological effects
 - *“I occasionally go to Starbucks just to get some espresso for that extra twitch in the morning.” - Male, 13-15, suburban group*
 - *“I do drink the diet Pepsi Max, which has more caffeine than normal. I usually drink them when I’m bike riding. I’ll put that in my water bottle and go.” - Male, 16-18, rural group*

Factors influencing beverage choices LEAST

- Parental influence
 - *“I used to drink Monster, but then my mom said I couldn’t anymore because it stunts your growth or what not. So I had to stop.” - Female, 13-15, suburban group*
 - *“[Energy drinks] affect me a lot. I get pretty energized and crazy, so my mom doesn’t really let me that much because I bounce off the walls.” - Female, 13-15, rural group*

Factors influencing beverage choices LEAST

- Nutrition

- *“I actually stopped drinking the Amp...some of these male athletes were taking a lot of these energy drinks and they’ve been having some health issues. ...Now I drink green tea, which also has B12 and stuff in it. I can get energy from that and it’s healthy.” - Female, 16-18, suburban group*
- *“I think [energy drinks] are loaded with sugars and too much caffeine.” -Female, 16-18, rural group*

Perception of liquid calories

- *“Sometimes I go to the movies and I will get popcorn and stuff. But my mom and I, we looked up how many fat grams were in it, and there was like 100 or something with all the butter. So now we never get anything. We just sneak pop or candy into the theater.”*
- Female, 13-15, suburban group
- *Moderator: “What do you get when you go [to Starbucks]?”*
Respondent: “Frappuccino.”
M: “Are you getting a donut or a muffin to go with it?”
R: “I try and stay away from that fatty stuff.”
- Male, 13-15, rural group

Recommendations

- Education and social marketing?
- Parental education?
- However...
 - If teens are motivated most by taste and social factors, then these strategies alone may not be effective.
- Tax and other strategies to effect pricing
- Changes in package sizes
- Product reformulation
- Restrictions on SSB marketing
- Access to free, safe drinking water in public places



www.bridgingthegapresearch.org

www.impactteen.org

www.yesresearch.org

