Alcohol and Sex: The Wrong Mix

Section C)1 of The Alcohol Beverages Advertising Code (ABAC) states that alcohol advertising must not depict the consumption or presence of alcohol beverages as the cause of or contributing to the achievement of personal, business, social, sporting, sexual or other success. However, this section of the code is continually breached by alcohol companies using attractive and scantily dressed young men and women to advertise their products. Little is being done to control this issue, which can be largely attributed to the fact that this advertising is self-regulated by the alcohol industry - this means that the regulation of alcohol advertising is seen as the responsibility of the industry rather than the government. When complaints are made, they are often rejected or, if they are upheld the alcohol companies are merely requested to alter or remove the advertisement. It is clear that there is a need for an independent or government regulator that has the power to issue fines to companies that are in breach of the code. This may cause them to think twice when they are briefing their advertising companies. Individuals concerned about breaches of the Alcohol Beverages Advertising Code can act on their concern by supporting movements to remove control from the alcohol industry, and in the interim, individuals are encouraged to continue filing complaints about inappropriate alcohol advertising with the Advertising Standards Board.

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