Public support for warning labels on alcoholic beverage containers

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ABSTRACT

Warning labels are now required on alcohol beverage containers in the United States. Prior to the enactment of the warning label law, a random sample of adults in the general population of the United States were interviewed by telephone to assess baseline knowledge and support for the warning labels (n= 2006). This paper proceeds on the assumption that public support is crucial for sustained success of alcohol control policies such as the warning label mandate. We found that a vast majority (87%) of the respondents felt that alcoholic beverages should have warning labels about possible health hazards, with abstention as the most significant predictor of support. A majority of the respondents also felt that alcohol education, server intervention, treatment and counter-advertisement programs should be increased. A large minority felt that alcohol taxes should be increased, store hours should be decreased, and the legal drinking age should be increased. Most respondents agreed that warning labels would not have much effect on heavy drinkers. When compared to responses to similar questions about alcohol control policies over the past 20 years, evidence supporting a conservative trend towards alcohol in the United States was found.