



ELSEVIER

Available online at www.sciencedirect.com

Public Health

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/puhe

Original Research

Provision of information to consumers about the calorie content of alcoholic drinks: did the Responsibility Deal pledge by alcohol retailers and producers increase the availability of calorie information?



M. Peticrew^{a,b,*}, N. Douglas^a, C. Knai^a, N. Maani Hessari^b,
M.A. Durand^a, E. Eastmure^a, N. Mays^a

^a Policy Innovation Research Unit, Faculty of Public Health and Policy, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM), 15-17 Tavistock Place, London WC1H 9SH, UK

^b Department of Social and Environmental Health Research, Faculty of Public Health and Policy, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM), 15-17 Tavistock Place, London WC1H 9SH, UK

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 15 July 2015
Received in revised form
19 April 2017
Accepted 20 April 2017
Available online 9 June 2017

Keywords:

Alcohol
Labelling
Calories
Evaluation
Responsibility Deal
Public health policy
Obesity

ABSTRACT

Objectives: Alcohol is a significant source of dietary calories and is a contributor to obesity. Industry pledges to provide calorie information to consumers have been cited as reasons for not introducing mandatory ingredient labelling. As part of the Public Health Responsibility Deal (RD) in England, alcohol retailers and producers committed to providing consumers with information on the calorie content of alcoholic drinks. This study examines what was achieved following this commitment and considers the implications for current industry commitments to provide information on alcohol calories.

Study design: Analysis of RD pledge delivery plans and progress reports. Assessment of calorie information in supermarkets and in online stores.

Methods: (i) Analysis of the content of pledge delivery plans and annual progress reports of RD signatories to determine what action they had committed to, and had taken, to provide calorie information. (ii) Analysis of the availability of calorie information on product labels; in UK supermarkets; and on online shopping sites and websites.

Results: No information was provided in any of 55 stores chosen to represent all the main UK supermarkets. Calorie information was not routinely provided on supermarkets' websites, or on product labels.

Conclusions: One of the stated purposes of the RD was to provide consumers with the information to make informed health-related choices, including providing information on the calorie content of alcoholic drinks. This study indicates that this did not take place to

* Corresponding author. Policy Innovation Research Unit, Faculty of Public Health and Policy, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM), 15-17 Tavistock Place, London WC1H 9SH, UK.

E-mail address: mark.peticrew@lshtm.ac.uk (M. Peticrew).

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.puhe.2017.04.020>

0033-3506/© 2017 The Royal Society for Public Health. Published by Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

any significant extent. The voluntary implementation of alcohol calorie labelling by industry needs to continue to be carefully monitored to determine whether and how it is done.

© 2017 The Royal Society for Public Health. Published by Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

Introduction

Alcohol is a significant source of calories in the diet of UK adults who drink, and a significant contributor to obesity.¹ On average, alcohol provides 8.4% and 6.4% of energy intake for adults aged 19–64 years, and 65 years and over, respectively.² The 2015 Public Health England report on sugar reduction reports that alcoholic drinks are one of the main contributors to sugar in the adult diet.³ An analysis of data from the Health Survey for England also found that the mean alcohol calorie consumption was 27% of the recommended daily calorie intake in men, and 19% in women on their heaviest drinking day, with a positive association between calories derived from alcohol and obesity.⁴ This relationship has been found in other countries.^{5,6}

Weight for weight, alcohol and fat contain almost the same number of calories.⁷ The NHS Choices website states that a pint of lager has about the same calorie content as a packet of crisps, and that two large glasses of white wine would provide women with nearly 20% of their recommended daily calorie intake, as well as putting them over the recommended daily limit for regular alcohol consumption.⁸ However, no country in the world currently requires the calorie content of alcohol to be stated on packaging, though it is a measure being actively considered in Ireland.^{9,10} Martin-Moreno et al.¹⁰ have noted that consumers have less access to health and nutritional information about alcoholic beverages than they do about a glass of milk, a bowl of cereal or a soft drink. In the UK, 85% of the consumers do not know the calorie content of a glass of wine.^{11,12}

A recent European Commission report on the mandatory labelling of alcoholic beverages suggested that industry appears to be increasingly willing to adopt voluntary initiatives to offer nutritional information, citing commitments by some alcohol producers.¹³ However, relatively little is known about how and to what extent such pledges are implemented by alcohol producers in the UK or in other EU countries.

There is one possible source of evidence on this issue. Many alcoholic drinks producers and retailers committed to providing calorie information about alcoholic drinks, as part of the Public Health Responsibility Deal (RD) in England, which was launched in 2011 (See [Box 1](#) and [Table 1](#)). The relevant voluntary pledge states: ‘A3. Awareness of Alcohol Units, Calories & other information in the Off-trade: We will provide simple and consistent information as appropriate in the off-trade (supermarkets and off-licences) as well as other marketing channels (e.g. in-store magazines), to raise awareness of the units, calorie content of alcoholic drinks, NHS lower-risk drinking guidelines, and the health harms associated with exceeding the guidelines.’ (See [Box 2](#)).

As part of a wider evaluation of the RD, we collected data on what action signatories to the pledge had taken. At that

time (October 2014), 50 organisations had committed to this pledge, including all the main UK supermarkets, alcohol producers such as Diageo, Heineken and Molson Coors, and representative bodies such as the Wine and Spirit Trade Association and the British Beer & Pub Association.¹⁴

Supermarkets are a particularly important outlet for alcohol. Evidence given to the House of Commons Health Select Committee on alcohol in 2009 noted that one of the biggest changes in alcohol availability in recent decades has been purchasing from supermarkets at heavily discounted prices, and the use by supermarkets of alcohol as loss leaders to pull in customers.¹⁵ Off-trade alcohol sales, which includes off-licences and supermarkets, accounts for about two-thirds of the alcohol market in Great Britain.¹⁶

This analysis examines whether the RD pledge did result in the provision of information on alcoholic beverage calories to consumers.

Methods

Analysis of RD pledge delivery plans and progress reports

On signing up to the RD, all organisations were asked to provide pledge delivery plans, setting out how they would deliver on each pledge they had selected. They were also asked to send annual progress reports to the Department of Health, setting out what they had achieved in the previous year. The delivery plans and annual progress reports were to be made

Box 1

The Public Health Responsibility Deal

The Public Health Responsibility Deal (RD) was launched by the Department of Health in England in March 2011 as a public-private partnership involving voluntary agreements by businesses and public bodies in which they pledge to make public health-promoting changes in the four areas of food, alcohol, physical activity and health at work (organised as four networks). The RD involves organisations committing to pledges to make changes within their organisation. The RD website (<https://responsibilitydeal.dh.gov.uk/about/>) states that it ‘embodies the Government’s ambition for a more collaborative approach to tackling the challenges caused by our lifestyle choices’.

One of the core RD commitments made by participating organisations is to ‘... foster a culture of responsible drinking, which will help people to drink within guidelines’.

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/5122879>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/5122879>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)