

Alcohol availability, marketing, and sexual health risk amongst urban and rural youth in South Africa: a community based qualitative study

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Multi-country study: SA, Tanzania and India

- Study on alcohol advertising and youth drinking
 - Developing countries given industry focus as new (target) market

- ... in partnership with the STRIVE research consortium with funding from DfID

- Objectives:
 - Alcohol availability and outdoor advertising
 - Youth experiences of alcohol advertising, drinking patterns and sexual health

Rationale: Why

- ❁ Public health priority: youth harmful drinking, multiple negative health and social outcomes
- ❁ Compelling evidence for link between alcohol availability through advertising and marketing and sexual risky behaviours
- ❁ Few studies exist globally, locally on youth voices on alcohol advertising
- ❁ Need for local evidence and youth voices for advocacy
 - youth perspectives to the SA alcohol advertising policy debate “The Control of Marketing of Alcoholic Beverages Bill”

Methods: What

- 🌀 Located licensed alcohol outlets and outdoor advertisements in study sites
- 🌀 Youth photography: to show alcohol adverts and impact of alcohol
 - 🌀 Discussions with youth on perspectives of alcohol – advertising and drinking patterns and sexual risk
 - 🌀 Participants: 27 young (15) males and (12) females 18 – 24 years (in + out of school)

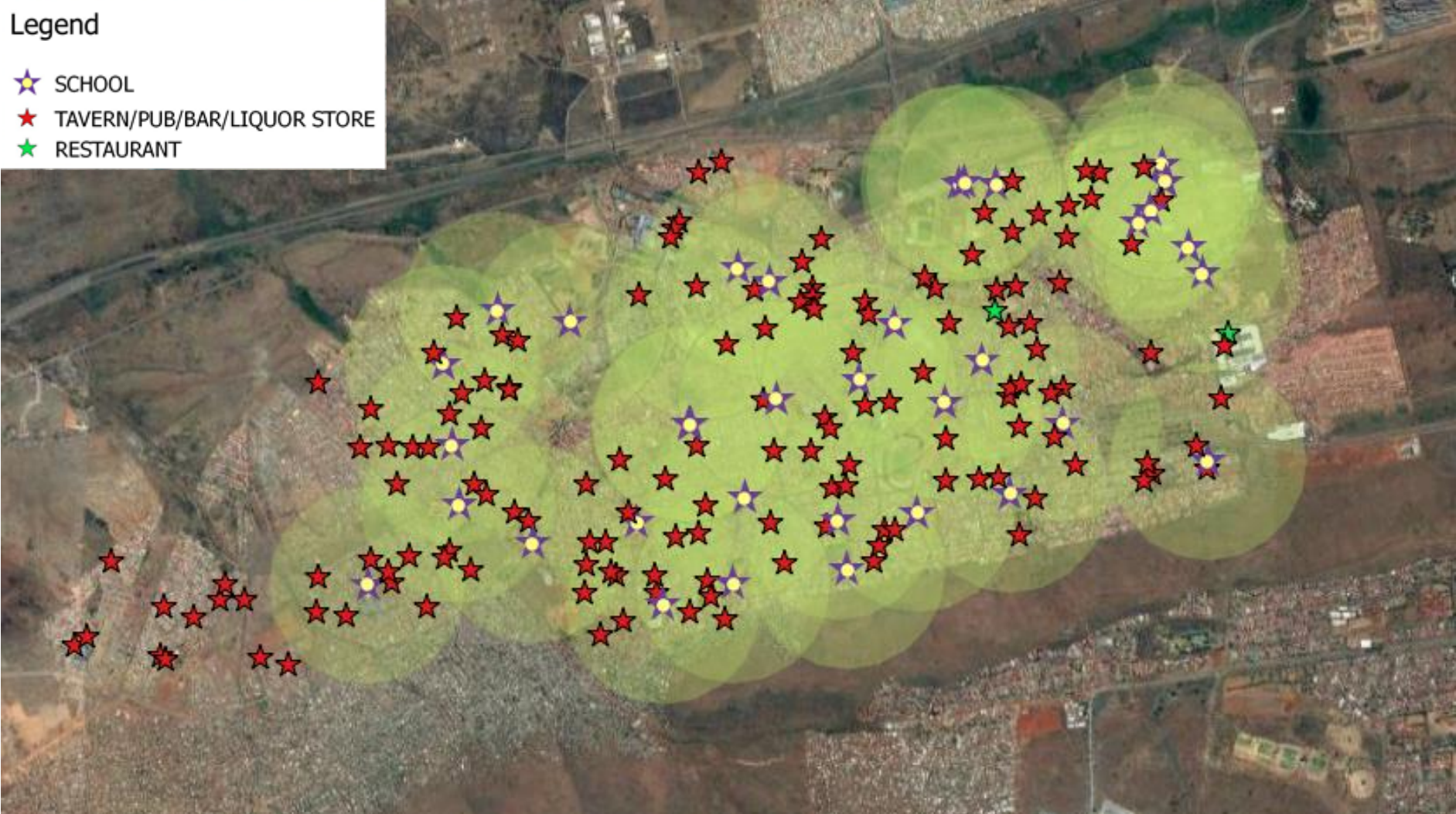
Findings

- High density of alcohol outlets and outdoor advertisements
 - Cross cutting youth views/ perspectives on alcohol availability, advertising and sexual health risk...

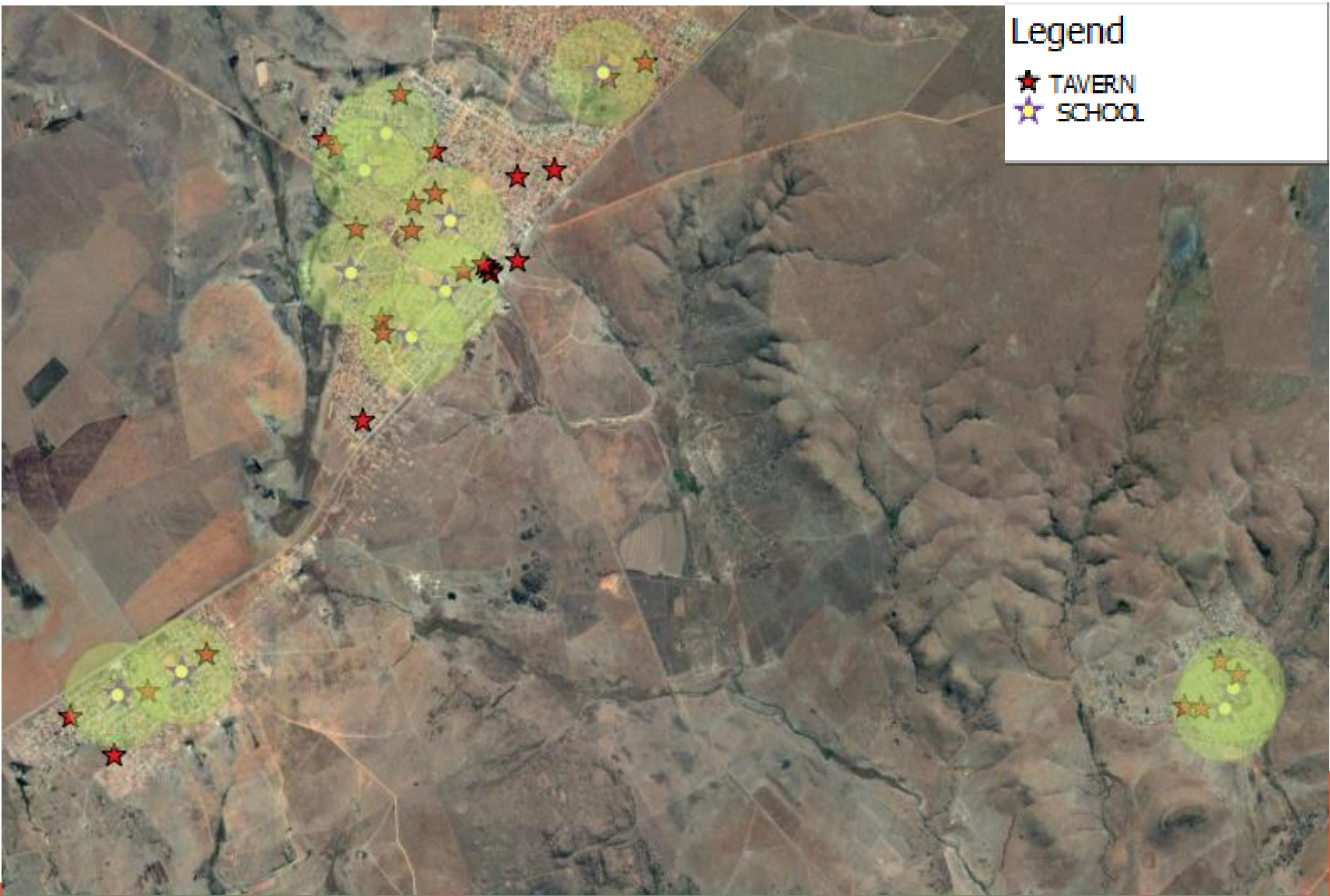
Urban area: 147 alcohol outlets vs 36 schools

Legend

- ★ SCHOOL
- ★ TAVERN/PUB/BAR/LIQUOR STORE
- ★ RESTAURANT



Rural area: 28 alcohol outlets vs 11 schools



Alcohol advertising is attractive

- Use of colour, celebrities, popular music, youth portrayed as having fun, socializing, enticing slogans and images or scenery – refreshment, relaxation, friendship

***Female:** People who sell alcohol, they make alcohol to seem like a cool thing... look at their facial expression as well, you know it seems like this thing [alcohol] makes them happy... another thing is that people advertising alcohol, make these cool slogans... **Male:** ...Attractive! ...*

***Female:** True, you will not be interested in reading that... The first thing that you'll come across is the big picture and the message [slogan] will be there and you will be like 'wow' and then you are sold... (mixed group, rural area)*

Alcohol Promotions

- Competitions
- Celebrity events at taverns
- Cheap prices and/ or discounts
 - happy hour', 'ladies' night' and 'buy 1 get 1 free'

Male: *They say Ladies' Night because ladies get their alcohol for free... Yho... the whole community goes! even if you are 14 years, as long as you're a girl you get in and get your free drink (mixed group, rural site)*

Female: *...it [advert] shows you that you bring back the bottle and they give you back R3 [from the R13 you paid] ... (mixed group, urban site)*

Gender norms in alcohol advertising

Beer for men

- Masculinity: physical strength, success and aspirations for future, sportsmanship

Male: *Ooh well... it means that if you drink this one, like you dream big, you have that mindset of, your mind, it starts to open up to see bigger things. Yah you have a bigger picture in your mind after you have drank Hansa.*

Male: *And you would say again ‘Brewed for the dreamers’ If you have dreams and then it gives you the courage to take action towards achieving your dreams. You see neh! ... (mixed group, urban site)*

- **Flavored alcoholic beverages “alcopops and ciders” for females**
 - Sweeter, fruitier taste
 - colorful and playful
 - Shape of the bottle

Brutal Fruit is mostly drunk by the ladies. So this advert is ... its market is the ladies...They know that most of the time it is the girls that drink this Brutal Fruit. So, this advert is for (the) ladies that is why they are using the lady to advertise this brutal fruit (mixed group, rural site)

Sales to under 18 year olds

Even though the rule is 'not for sale for persons under 18' but still if you can look around, like go around the taverns at night or like uhm... daylight... Not everybody is above the age of 18... (mixed gender group, rural site)

Sexual risk

- **Transactional sex as currency for alcohol**

...I will also end up getting a partner like an old man... and I don't mind that he might make me sick or give me whatever he has... just for him to give me that money. We are selling ourselves as girls in order to get things... (female group, rural site)

*Like you get used to drinking [on] weekends, for you Friday, Saturday and Sunday you are on it [**All**: Yah] you don't want to be home but just want to go out... because you can't afford to buy alcohol every weekend, these are some of the things that make people to go to Sugar Daddys ... then... they want you to sleep with them... (female group, urban site)*

- **Unprotected, unplanned and regretted sex:**

Unprotected sex happens where we are having fun. What would happen would be at a fun place, I have drank alcohol, then you meet somebody that you don't know and their status and then you leave for home with them... Isn't it you are both drunk? When you get there aah! We do what we do and without protection (Female group, urban site)

Like sometimes it's not like rape... It's just that when people are drunk, they don't think straight, and about condoms or what the results could be, it could be pregnancy, STI or HIV (Female group, rural site)

- **Drinking puts young women at risk of sexual assault**

***Female:**... (if you have been drinking with guys at a tavern) when they realize that you want to run, they are going to kick you and if they get you they are going to rape you.*

*... **Female:** when you are intoxicated, you are unable to fight him back. They say alcohol hits you on the knees and you are not able to fight him off. Look at me [slender figure] even if you try to push him... it won't happen, yah (female group, urban site)*

It is like when you are drunk, say you are drinking and you drink, like when "ulahli' tosh" [black out] the boys will take advantage of you ... and have sex with you...then... (female group, rural site)

Study recommendations

- 🌀 Shift the focus from individual responsibility to structural issues in addressing alcohol misuse (policies and environmental influences)
 - Regulate alcohol marketing
 - increasing the price
 - limiting outlet density
- 🌀 Youth are affected by alcohol advertising, thus need to create opportunities for youth, community and the public at large to engage in the alcohol policy development process
 - particularly The Control of Marketing of Alcoholic Beverages Bill

Conclusions

- ☞ Alcohol is widely available to youth in rural and urban communities of South Africa
- ☞ Youth are heavily exposed to advertising and marketing.
- ☞ Youth are vulnerable to sexual health risk linked to harmful alcohol use.
- ☞ We need a multi-level approach to address youth harmful alcohol