

Drunken celebrities, new media and young women's drinking cultures

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OBJECTIVES: Contemporary drinking cultures are located within an increasingly technologically mediated world, saturated with images of youthful drunken excess, including 'drunken celebs'. An increase in excessive young women's drinking has also led to questions regarding changing gender identities, changing drinking cultures and associated health outcomes. This research explored representations of drinking and gender on popular celebrity websites, and their role in young adults' drinking cultures and gender identities.

METHODS: Multimodal discourse analysis was employed to analyse the images and language on selected websites, to examine how they functioned together to construct meaning. In stage two, young women and men discussed these websites and we explored how they jointly accepted, negotiated or resisted their meanings.

RESULTS: Online texts provided a significant series of resources that were drawn upon by the participants. They reinforced traditional notions of hegemonic masculinity and femininity, and particularly stigmatised women who deviated from the current gender order. Spaces for resistance and alternative positionings were identified in participants' talk.

CONCLUSIONS: Implications of the results for gender identities, gender relations, drinking cultures, and drinking practices are discussed. It is concluded that current discourses and meanings are open to challenge to provide better outcomes for alcohol- related public health interventions.