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Brain measurements can reveal success of alcohol risk messages

By studying how our brains “synchronise” during shared experiences, social neuroscientists at the University of Konstanz show if alcohol risk messages catch on in an audience and lead to a reduction in drinking.

Risky drinking is a significant problem for youth and young adults, and mass media messages—such as TV commercials—are frequently used in campaigns aimed at warning them about alcohol use. But how these videos effectively increase awareness of risky drinking, or if they reduce alcohol use in an audience, is not always clear. A new study published in *NeuroImage* has applied the science of brain synchronisation to assessing the success of alcohol risk campaigns. The results show that the stronger, more engaging videos led to more synchronised brain activity in viewers and that this was associated with subsequent reductions in risky drinking. By showing that neural measures can help to predict alcohol message success, the study shows promise for applications in public health.

Read the full story in the University of Konstanz’s online magazine, *campus.kn*:

<https://www.campus.uni-konstanz.de/en/science/brain-measurements-can-reveal-success-of-alcohol-risk-messages>

Facts:

- University of Konstanz researchers publish experimental study examining the audience reaction of young adults using electroencephalography (EEG) while watching real-life health advertisements about risky alcohol use.
- The study found out that the stronger, more engaging ads lead to more synchronised brain signals in viewers and this synchronisation is correlated to subsequent reduction in drinking.
- Original publication: “Strong health messages increase audience brain coupling” by Martin Imhof, Ralf Schmälzle, Britta Renner and Harald Schupp is published in *NeuroImage* with the DOI [10.1016/j.neuroimage.2020.116527](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.neuroimage.2020.116527).
- Authors Martin Imhof, Harald Schupp, and Britta Renner are all members of the multidisciplinary research unit “RiskDynamics”, which is funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG), and of the DFG Cluster of Excellence “Centre for the Advanced Study of Collective Behaviour”.
- The full story is available at the University of Konstanz’s online magazine, *campus.kn*: In *campus.kn*, we use multimedia approaches to provide insights into our research and science, study and teaching as well as life on campus.

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