

Malt Liquor Beer Related Knowledge, Influences, and Drinking Styles Among an Inner City Sample of African American Men¹

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ABSTRACT

African Americans are only 14 percent of the U.S. population but consume 30 percent of all malt liquor beer (MLB). MLB typically has 1.5 times the alcohol content of regular beer and is disproportionately marketed to African Americans. Despite this fact, patterns of high alcohol content beverage consumption among African Americans have had little empirical investigation. This study seeks to determine the frequency of MLB drinking, influences associated with MLB use, and MLB knowledge among 150 African American men chosen from randomly selected barbershops. Results of this study support the hypothesis that infrequent heavier drinkers prefer the larger container sizes although they are unclear about the intoxication power of MLB. Factors influencing MLB consumption also varied by drinking style. Moderate MLB drinkers were more influenced by billboard ads than both heavy and very heavy MLB drinkers.

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INTRODUCTION

Alcohol use continues to be one of the most serious and complex social and health-related problems affecting the African American community (Powell 2000). Overall, African Americans tend to drink less than other ethnic groups (Caetano and Clark 1998; Caetano and Kaskutas 1995), yet suffer more negative consequences from their drinking (Greenfield and Brown Taylor 2001; Brown Taylor and Bluthenthal 2000; Herd 1994; Jones-Webb, Snowden, Herd, and Short 1997; Caetano and Kaskutas 1996; Smart 1996). Although African Americans are only 14 percent of the population (U.S. Census Bureau 1998), they drink approximately 30 percent of all malt liquor beer (MLB) consumed in the United States (Alaniz and Wilkes 1998; Lusane 1991). This study investigates demographic characteristics and drinking styles of a community sample of male African American MLB drinkers.

The alcohol content of regular beers ranges from 3 percent to 4.5 percent by volume (Case, Distefano and Logan 2000; Logan, Case and Distefano 1999; Papazian 1997; Powell 1996; LaFrance 1996; Smith 1995; Delos 1994; Forget 1988). In contrast, most MLBs have nearly twice that amount, ranging from 6 percent to 12 percent, depending on the brand and state where sold (Powell 1996 and 2000; Martin and Nirenberg 1991). At 4 percent alcohol, a standard drink of regular beers such as Budweiser, Miller, or Coors is 12 ounces, approximately 12 grams of pure alcohol (Miller, Heather, and Hall 1991). At a conservative 6.25 percent alcohol by volume, a standard drink of MLB, such as Olde English 800, Schlitz Malt Liquor, St. Ides or Colt 45, would be 8 ounces. Thus, MLB provides more alcohol per standard serving than regular beer.

However, MLB is commonly found in 40-ounce containers that are often sold in refrigerator at grocery and convenience stores and consumed as a single serving, primarily in African American communities (Powell 2000 1996; Lusane 1991). Such a container holds an alcohol equivalence of almost five 12-ounce cans of regular beer (4 percent alcohol), five 4-ounce glasses of wine (12 percent alcohol), or five 1.25-ounce servings of spirits (40 percent alcohol) (Brown 1996). Despite this, most surveys seeking to measure alcohol consumption patterns for African Americans include questions that either explicitly or implicitly define a "drink" or "standard drink" in

campaigns draw on symbols and images important to African American youth, for instance the use of rap stars whose lyrics glorify MLB use (Powell 1997 and 2000; Brown Taylor 2000). In addition to advertising aimed at young males in lower socioeconomic status (SES) communities, the alcohol industry has begun using marketing strategies to target more affluent and older African Americans. Examples include Anheuser-Busch's King Cobra malt liquor promotion, which uses African American actor and former football star Fred "The Hammer" Williamson, and Miller Brewing Company's advertising targeting more upwardly mobile viewers (Alaniz and Wilkes 1998). Given the efforts of the alcohol industry to saturate the African American community with its advertisements, this study seeks to determine what self-reported influence, if any, does advertising in the context of other influences seem to have on MLB consumption.

This study aimed to answer four key questions: (a) What are the demographic characteristics and drinking styles of MLB drinkers in this community sample? (b) Is it only the infrequent heavy drinkers who drink from the large MLB containers? (c) Are the heaviest drinkers less knowledgeable about the alcohol content of MLB? (d) What factors influence MLB consumption?

METHODS

Data Collection. One hundred fifty self-identified African American men were recruited from 10 randomly selected barbershops in South Central Los Angeles. Barbershops were a desirable recruitment location for this study because they are safe, easy to access, and provide a number of potential respondents. For many African American men, barbershops represent a centralized meeting place where a cross-section of the community routinely gathers (Anderson 1999). After churches and liquor outlets, barbershops and beauty shops are the most visible businesses in South Central Los Angeles (Crenshaw Chamber of Commerce 2000). Barbershops are also highly accessible, with many operating 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., six days a week. In addition to the ease of access, barbershops are ideal for sampling because the wait time allows a researcher to approach potential respondents, explain the study, and obtain consent.

terms of mainstream alcohol beverage types. In addition, many researchers use standard container sizes, (12-ounce can, mug, or bottle for regular beer equivalent to a small 4-ounce wine glass for table wine, and a 1-ounce shot glass for spirits and mixed drinks), which is not how MLB is consumed (Russell 1995). The current study reconceptualizes beverage type to include MLB as well as the "typical" container sizes to account for the larger containers purchased by this sample of current MLB drinkers. Furthermore, it seeks to determine if the "infrequent" (once a week or less) and "very heavy" MLB drinkers (8 or more standard drinks per occasion) are more likely to drink from larger MLB container sizes than other MLB drinkers.

The U.S. population has very little knowledge about alcohol beverage content in general and MLB in particular (Martin and Nirenberg 1991). The sample under study here is from California, where malt liquors can be called beer and an alcohol content above 5.7 percent for malt liquor beer must be indicated on the label (State of California Alcohol Beverage Control 2000). Thus, there are some strength cues available on the label for MLB products; although the extent to which they are noticed has not been studied. This study asks respondents about their perceptions of the alcohol content of regular beer and MLB, and reports on the association between knowledge of alcohol content and heavy MLB consumption.

In addition, this study sought to investigate factors influencing African Americans' consumption of MLB, including advertisements in movies and music, billboard ads, social norms and peer pressure. In relation to advertising, the alcohol beverage industry spends more than \$2 billion each year in the United States on advertising and promotion (Alaniz and Wilkes 1998), with increasing expenditures since the 1970s on minority markets (Powell 1997 and 2000). African Americans spend more than \$200 billion annually (Alaniz and Wilkes 1998). In a bid for this business, the alcohol industry uses an array of strategies: product endorsement by popular African American celebrities, donations to highly visible leadership organizations such as the NAACP and historically Black colleges and universities, advertisements in the Black media and Black communities, and sponsorship of traditional African American community cultural events and entertainment venues. The aggressive advertising

several times a week were combined to form the "frequent MLB drinker" category and once a week, several times a month and once a month or less responses were combined to form the "less frequent MLB drinker" category.

Preference for MLB container size was measured by asking, "What size malt liquor beer do you prefer?" The four response options were: 12-ounce can, 22-ounce wide mouth bottle, 40-ounce bottle, or 64-ounce bottle. Amount of MLB consumed in a sitting was assessed by asking, "How much malt liquor beer do you drink at one time?" (one 12-ounce can, one 22-ounce bottle, one 40-ounce bottle, one 64-ounce bottle, two or more 12-ounce cans, two or more 22-ounce bottles, two or more 40-ounce bottles, or two or more 64-ounce bottles). For analysis, drink size was dichotomized by combining 12-ounce and 22-ounce responses to form the "small" container size variable, versus 40-ounce and 64-ounce responses indicating the "large" container size.

A "standard drink" contains approximately 12 grams of ethanol. This is the equivalent of a 12-ounce container of regular beer having approximately the same alcohol content as an 8-ounce serving of MLB. To determine the number of standard drinks usually consumed, the preferred size of the MLB drink in ounces was multiplied by the number of self-reported "drinks" consumed at one time, and the product divided by 8 (ounces). Quantity was further operationalized (post-hoc) by creating an MLB "very heavy drinker" category (Knupfer 1984) indicating 8 or more *standard* MLB drinks per sitting, versus an MLB "heavy drinker" category (Greenfield, Rogers, and Midanik 1999; Greenfield and Kaskutas 1993), indicating five to seven *standard* MLB drinks per setting, versus an MLB "moderate drinker" category, indicating one to four *standard* drinks per sitting.

Factors Influencing Malt Liquor Beer Consumption. Using a Likert response format, nine questions asked participants to report the degree to which they agreed with a series of questions aimed at measuring the individual factors that influenced them to drink MLB. For example, "Television ads have had a big influence on my drinking malt liquor beer." Respondents were also asked to report how often (always, often, sometimes, never) they were influenced to drink MLB by seeing a liquor store, television or radio advertisement. In the

Barbershops were selected from the *Black Directory*, a community-based yellow pages-type publication of African American businesses, which listed approximately 150 in current operation. At each barbershop, the interviewer approached each man who entered the establishment and sat in the waiting area. Prospective participants were asked to complete a 20-minute self-administered survey on African American men's knowledge, attitudes and MLB drinking patterns. Inclusion criteria included South Central Los Angeles area residency and at least 21 years of age. All of the men who were approached agreed to participate. Before proceeding with the questionnaire, volunteers were given a consent form and told that they would receive \$10.00 for their participation. Fifteen subjects were recruited at each of the 10 participating barber shops. The interviewer was matched with the respondents by ethnicity but not by gender.

Measures. The Brown Malt Liquor Beer Survey (BMLBS) is a self-completed instrument that contains original questions designed and pilot tested by the researcher specifically for this study (Brown 1996). It includes questions assessing demographic characteristics such as age, education, marital status and employment status. For analysis, respondents who reported being married or living with someone were categorized as married and all other responses were combined to form the unmarried category. The men in our sample were considered employed if they reported full-time employment. Less than full-time employment, retired, self-employed and laid-off responses were combined as the less than full-time employment category.

Malt Liquor Beer (MLB) Drinking Patterns. Using the BMLBS, men who reported current MLB drinking were asked to complete questions related to MLB drinking patterns (usual quantity, frequency and container size), influences to consume MLB, knowledge of alcohol content and brand names associated with regular beer and MLB brand names. To capture the frequency of MLB consumption, respondents were asked, "How frequently do you drink malt liquor beer?" Response options were: several times a day, once a day, several times a week, about once a week, a few times a month, about once a month, and less than once a month.

For analysis, two categories were created post-hoc. Daily and

final analysis, these response categories were dichotomized as never and sometimes or more often.

Knowledge of Alcohol Content and Beverage Brand Name Distinction. We used three closed-ended items to assess knowledge of alcohol content by volume. One item asked respondents to determine the average amount of alcohol by volume in a 12-ounce bottle or can of regular beer. Another item asked respondents to determine the average amount of alcohol in a 40-ounce bottle of malt liquor beer. We also asked participants how strongly they agreed that MLB and regular beer have the same alcohol content. Again, we combined the agree and strongly agree responses to create one category, with disagree as the second.

Brand name recognition was determined with two open-ended questions asking respondents to "name a brand of regular beer" and to "name a brand of malt liquor beer." The investigator recoded open-ended questions into a correct/incorrect dichotomous variable for each beverage based on correct identification of brand name in each category.

DATA ANALYSIS

Statistical analyses were performed using the chi square statistic and t-tests as appropriate. Statistical significance is reported at the $\alpha = .05$ (two-tailed) level. Fisher's exact test was applied to adjust chi-square when the expected values in some cells were less than five for tables of 4x3 and smaller; Yates' correction was used in larger tables.

RESULTS

Sample. Overall, subjects ranged in age from 21 to 89, with a mean age of 43 years. Over half (51 percent) of the respondents were married or living with a significant other. Forty-three percent had at least some college education. Slightly less than half (48 percent) were employed full-time. The sample consisted of 11 respondents who reported never drinking (taste or a sip) an alcoholic beverage (lifetime abstainer), 55 people who once drank alcohol in their lifetime but did not currently drink, and 84 current drinkers.

All but six of the 84 current drinkers consume MLB. Eligible for this analysis were those 78 self-identified current MLB drinkers of which more than a third were "moderate" MLB drinkers (one to four *standard* MLB drinks per sitting); 45 percent were "heavy" MLB drinkers (five to seven drinks) and 19 percent were "very heavy" MLB drinkers (8 or more drinks).

Demographic Characteristics of MLB Drinkers. The mean age of all MLB drinkers in this sample was 45 (SD=19). Although the mean age of MLB drinkers did not differ significantly, heavy and very heavy MLB drinkers were more likely to be older than moderate MLB drinkers. Of the respondents who were married, less than a quarter were very heavy MLB drinkers, 49 percent heavy MLB drinkers and 34 percent moderate MLB drinkers. The vast majority (83 percent) of the MLB drinkers in this sample had at least a high school education (73 percent of moderate MLB drinkers, 91 percent of heavy MLB drinkers and only 38 percent of very heavy MLB drinkers). With regards to employment status, less than half of the moderate and heavy MLB drinkers were employed on a full-time basis (39 percent and 41 percent, respectively) compared to only 20 percent of the very heavy MLB drinkers. Regardless of MLB drinking

Table 1

**Usual Number of Standard MLB Drinks
for an MLB-Drinking Occasion
by Age, Marital Status, Education and Employment Status
in Percent**

		Usual Number of Standard MLB Drinks Usually Consumed per Occasion			P value
		Moderate: 1-4 (n=28)	Heavy: 5-7 (n=35)	Very Heavy: 8+ (n=15)	
Overall Percent of Sample		36%	45%	19%	
Age	21-30	61%	33%	06%	.01*
	31-50	26%	39%	35%	
	51 and over	31%	59%	10%	
Mean Age		41	52	43	.06
Marital Status	Single	43%	29%	29%	.35
	Married	34%	49%	17%	
Education	Less than High School	31%	46%	23%	.87
	High School Graduate	35%	42%	23%	
	More Than High School	35%	49%	15%	
Employment	Full Time	39%	41%	20%	.79
	Less than Full Time	33%	49%	18%	

status, there were no significant differences regarding marital status, education or employment.

Patterns of malt liquor beer drinking. Over half of the current MLB drinkers (52 percent) drank MLB at least once a week. Sixty-four percent reported drinking five or more MLB drinks per sitting

Table 2
Conditional Probability of Container Size Given MLB-Drinking Status
(n=78)

Usual Container Size	Maximum Number of Standard MLB Drinks			P value
	Moderate: 1-4 (n=26)	Heavy: 5-7 (n=6)	Very Heavy: 8+ (n=15)	
12-ounce	64%	0%	0%	< .001
22-ounce	36%	49%	0%	
40-ounce	0%	51%	20%	
64-ounce	0%	0%	80%	

(“heavy” to “very heavy drinking”) and over two-fifths (42 percent) drank MLB from containers 40 oz. or larger (Table 1).

MLB Drinking Characteristics. Across all drinking patterns, more than half of the respondents (n=45) reported drinking from the smaller 12 oz. and 22 oz. containers. There was no significant relationship between preferred container size and frequency of drinking MLB ($p=.97$). With regard to drinking style, 100 percent of those who drank from large containers were very heavy MLB drinkers ($p<.001$, Table 2). Conversely, 64 percent of those who preferred the smallest container size were more likely to be moderate MLB drinkers ($p<.001$).

Influences to Consume MLB. Table 3 presents factors which influenced MLB drinkers to drink the product. With regard to drinking status, moderate MLB drinkers were 44 percent more likely to be influenced by billboard ads than both heavy and very heavy MLB drinkers ($p=.04$). Movies and seeing others drink appear to have a greater influence on heavy MLB drinkers.

Ethanol Content Knowledge. Regardless of MLB drinking pattern, less than half of the MLB drinkers knew the percentage of alcohol content in MLB or regular beer (Table 4). However, more than three quarters of all MLB drinkers knew the alcohol content

Table 3
Percentage Reporting Various Influences to Consume
Malt Liquor Beer by Usual Quantity of MLB Drinking
(n=78)

	Maximum Number of Standard MLB Drinks Usually Consumed per Occasion			P value
	Moderate: 1-4 (n=28)	Heavy: 5-7 (n=35)	Very Heavy: 8+ (n=15)	
Agree/Strongly Agree				
Radio Ads	36	47	17	.33
Feel More Respected	38	45	17	.25
Feel Powerful	35	48	17	.38
Music (Except Rap)	37	47	16	.29
Movies	32	52	16	.11
Rap Music	33	52	15	.15
Seeing Others in Community Drink	32	52	17	.06
Television Ads	33	49	18	.41*
Billboard Ads	44	36	19	.04
Seeing Other Men Drink	48	33	19	.29
Always/Often/Sometimes				
Seeing a TV Ad	38	31	31	.41
Seeing a Liquor Store	23	59	18	.51
Hearing a Radio Ad	18	46	36	.33

*p<.05. **p<.01. ***p<.001

Table 4
Conditional Probabilities of Knowledge of
Alcohol Content and Beverage Distinction Given MLB Drinking
(n=78)

	Proportion Knowledgeable in Each Group			P value
	Moderate: 1-4 (n=28)	Heavy: 5-7 (n=35)	Very Heavy: 8+ (n=15)	
Knowledge of Percentage of Alcohol Content				
In Regular Beer	46	37	47	.70
In MLB	36	46	47	.68
Knowledge of Relative Strength MLB vs. Regular Beer	79	85	79	.75
Knowledge of Brand Names				
Named an MLB Brand When Asked to Name Regular Beer	48	68	64	.28
Named a Regular Beer When Asked to Name an MLB	37	37	36	.99

in MLB and regular beer was not the same. In addition, a large proportion of MLB drinkers are uncertain about which brands represent regular beer or malt liquor beer (Table 4). No significant differences exist between groups on knowledge of alcohol content and brand name recognition.

DISCUSSION

This study took an encompassing look at MLB consumption. Combining data on South Central Los Angeles demographics, MLB consumption styles and the influence of media advertising, it provides an initial indication of which factors influence MLB consumers to drink this product and factors that influence the extent of consumption. In addition, it investigated the association between various demographic characteristics and number of *standard* MLB drinks consumed, usual container size and MLB drinking status as well as knowledge of alcohol content and MLB drinking levels.

First, this study addresses the stereotype of the malt liquor beer drinker as an unemployed, under-educated African American teenager by gaining information on who consumes MLB. Our sample included men recruited at randomly selected barbershops in a large inner-city community and found large amounts of MLB consumption among an older, largely employed and educated African American sample. A larger proportion of respondents were heavy to very heavy MLB drinkers, with 64 percent typically drinking 5+ MLBs at a sitting, 42 percent doing so once a week. This may be explained, in part, by the fact that malt liquor beers contain addictive ingredients such as high amounts of sugar and ethanol (Powell 1996 and 2000), are easy to access (Alaniz 1998; Powell 1996 and 2000; Brown Taylor 1996), and are inexpensively priced (Powell 1997 and 2000; Herd 2000; Scribner 2000; Brown Taylor 2000; Greenfield and Brown Taylor 2001) all of which make this product very appealing. The finding that MLB is popular among at least some samples of older African American urban men is consistent with epidemiological reports that African American men start heavy drinking in their mid to late thirties (Caetano and Kaskutas 1996; Herd 1994). The consequence of this is that African Americans tend to drink for a longer period of time resulting in higher mortality rates due to cirrhosis of the liver and esophageal cancer (NIAAA 2000).

With respect to the questions about container size, a picture emerges of MLB consumption in which most MLB drinkers (75 percent) of the sample drank from larger containers (22 oz and 40 oz) frequently marketed in most inner-city communities (Greenfield, Brown Taylor 2001; Alaniz 1998; Powell 1996 and 1999; Brown Taylor 1996). However, a preference was not found for larger (22oz+)

servings to be limited to those who drank frequently (weekly or more often), nor only to those who drank the equivalent of five or more *standard* drinks of MLB at a time. Thirty-six percent of the MLB drinkers preferred large container sizes but drank MLB less than weekly, and 13 percent drank from large containers but drank less than 5+ at a sitting. Related, heavy drinking (5+ per sitting) was not restricted to the frequent drinkers: 29 percent of the MLB drinkers had high quantities, but only periodically.

As for knowledge about alcohol content and what constitutes a malt liquor beer, our findings are consistent with other literature that indicates many MLB consumers do not know the intoxication power of specific types of malt beverages (Martin and Nirenberg 1991). Only one in three of the malt liquor beer drinkers in this sample knew the alcohol content of that beverage and only two out of three could distinguish an MLB brand from regular beer. Many do not differentiate between malt liquor beer and regular beer, although the majority of respondents acknowledged that the alcohol content is not the same. The men surveyed may be responding more to the physical sensations (known as the "kick") experienced during malt liquor beer drinking, rather than actually knowing just how much the alcohol content differs from regular beer. Although, in California, manufacturers of malt liquor beer are legally bound to put the alcohol content on the label, neither the ingredients nor the alcohol content appear on most labels (Scribner 2000). It may not be surprising, then, that there was little knowledge regarding the amount of actual ethanol being consumed. Through aggressive advertising campaigns targeting the African American community, African American men have come to associate the word "beer" with malt liquor. The packaging of malt liquor beer resembles regular beer, they are often placed side-by-side in the refrigerator section of the store, and the contents look the same.

It should be noted that the regular beer brand question preceded the malt liquor beer question in the self-administered survey. It is possible that when many men read the word beer, they immediately associated it with malt liquor. These data suggest that the men surveyed may have had more exposure to malt liquor beer than regular beer. Compounded by the use of the word "beer" (i.e. malt liquor beer) these results suggest that advertisements and subliminal

messages may have affected the men at a subconscious level (Powell 1997 and 2000).

Our findings with regard to what influenced the men in our sample to consume MLB are consistent with the literature (Herd 2000). Mass media and advertising, intrapersonal influences (the need to feel powerful and respected) and interpersonal or social norms (seeing other men drink) most influenced respondents to drink MLB. This finding may be explained, in part, by the fact that the men in this sample are being inundated with MLB advertisements, suggesting that drinking MLB will make you feel powerful and respected (Powell 1997 and 2000).

There are some methodological issues that should be taken into consideration before generalizing the results of this study to other African American men. First, accurately determining drinking categories poses a unique challenge. When participants were asked for specific brand names (i.e., of regular beer) they often misclassified the beverage by naming a malt liquor beer brand. This and the reverse tended to occur regardless of drinking status. It is possible that the men were drinking more malt liquor beer than they indicated by self-report and that the participants' self-identified drinking behavior may therefore be underestimated. Respondents who self-identified as current alcohol drinkers (but did not report consuming malt liquor beer) may actually have consumed malt liquor beer (i.e., those who named a malt liquor beer brand for a regular beer brand). Because some of the men may be misclassified based on their responses, there is a heightened need for caution in interpreting the findings that compare drinking groups. Future studies could benefit from developing a data collection strategy to increase the likelihood of correct self-identification of malt liquor beer consumption. More specifically, instead of asking brand name in order to determine level of knowledge, asking respondents to name a brand name in the context of beverage specific quantity/frequency questions may provide a clearer reference point with which to determine consumption of high alcohol content products. In addition, statistical significance was attained in very few of the comparisons undertaken. Given the small sample size in this exploratory sample, power to detect differences was low. It might be that larger cell sizes within group comparisons would have yielded more significant, were a larger

sample size obtained.

In addition, the sample included in this study was limited to African American men who get their haircut in South Central Los Angeles area barbershops. This convenience sample of African American men may systematically differ from the general population of African American men. Almost all of the men surveyed were employed while the unemployment rate for African American men in South Central Los Angeles is as much as 30 percent (US Census 2000). Therefore, the ability to generalize to African American men is limited. However, few studies have been done of this important topic among African Americans and these findings are noteworthy.

According to Gary and Berry (1985) many cross cultural researchers have established that studies utilizing African American participants must be careful when generalizing their results due to the high heterogeneity within the same ethnic group. Therefore, although all of the participants are of African American descent, it cannot be assumed that those who participated are representative of all African Americans in general and African American men in particular. Further, generalization of any results that were obtained in this study to other African American men that are in any way different from this specific sample should be limited.

A primary suggestion for future research is to conduct a qualitative study (Shorter-Gooden 1995; Strunin 2001) of African American's experiences related to consumption of malt liquor beer and related drinking practices. One important aim of such a study might determine the various names associated with malt liquor beer and other high strength products. For example, malt liquor beer is commonly referred to "Old E," "brass monkey," "jungle juice" and "8-Ball" in rap music and many inner-city communities. If researchers do not have an understanding of the various "unscientific" or "street" terminology used to describe a non-mainstream drink, an entire segment of society's drinking patterns and practices may not be accounted for in an area where new alcohol products are frequently introduced. Thus, allowing MLB drinkers to elaborate about their drinking styles and experiences (in their own words) may help inform the field about which questions related to specific alcohol products should be asked during quantitative interviews. A small-scale qualitative study of this matter could substantially inform alcohol

researchers and provide in-depth ethnographic information on an often missed segment of the alcohol consuming population.

A large-scale beverage-specific epidemiological study, including men and women, is urgently needed to determine the extent of high alcohol content beverage consumption in inner-city communities such as the one under study here. In order to measure more accurately the drinking patterns of those who consume high alcohol content beverages, such studies must take into account the variations in container sizes, alcohol content and product classifications. In order to understand exactly how respondents define and consume MLB, researchers should provide a combination of both open-ended and closed-ended questions as well as vessel models or photos (Kaskutas 2000) to measure quantity, frequency, drink size and brand.

Given that African American men have been estimated to drink a third of all malt liquor beer, it is unsettling that so little is known about African American men's knowledge, attitudes and malt liquor beer drinking behavior. Future studies might focus on identifying resilience and protective factors to get a sense of why some men abstain from drinking, and what factors contribute to heavy drinking in older samples of African American men.

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