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Effects of emotional tone and visual complexity on processing health risk and benefit information in DTC advertising

Rebecca Norris & Paul Bolls

The expenditure of direct-to-consumer (DTC) prescription drug advertising has more than quadrupled since 1996 reaching \$4.2 billion in 2005. This study examines how emotional tone and visual complexity affect recognition and attitude toward the ad in DTC drug advertising. Using 50-55 and 70-75 year olds participants, the experiment examines the impact of cognitive aging on memory for risks and benefits communicated through televised DTC ads.