Changing Social Norms: A Mass Media Campaign for Youth Ages 12-18

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ABSTRACT

Objective: To create a mass media campaign that endeavours to a) denormalize tobacco use among youth aged 12-18, b) empower youth to stay tobacco product free, and c) increase awareness of the dangers of tobacco use, while using positive messaging.

Participants: Target age group was youth between the ages of 12 and 18 years.

Setting: The mass media campaign was developed, implemented, and evaluated within the city of Calgary.

Intervention: The mass media campaign consisted of posters for schools and other venues frequented by youth (e.g., community centres, libraries, fitness centres, restaurants, movie theatres), posters for transit (e.g., bus shelters, LRT shelters, back of bus) print advertisements, television/radio public service announcements, an interactive community website for youth, a media launch event, promotional items, and organizational efforts to cross-promote the campaign. The creative concept was based on intercept interviews, focus group testing, and other research conducted by the campaign's creative team and youth volunteers in order to identify the key elements of this campaign.

Outcomes: A total of 149 students completed both a baseline and follow-up survey to evaluate the marketing activities of the campaign. A total of 27 youth participated in prototype testing to compare this positive-messaging campaign with negative-toned tobacco reduction campaigns. Six stakeholders/partners participated in stakeholder interviews to assess their thoughts and learnings regarding the campaign process.

Conclusion: The evaluation respondents viewed the campaign positively and showed strong recall of the messaging.

Key words: Social marketing; youth; tobacco reduction

La traduction du résumé se trouve à la fin de l'article.

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Commercial tobacco use among youth is a public health concern because it is addictive and lethal. Tobacco use causes 90% of lung cancers, 75% of emphysema and chronic bronchitis, and 25% of ischaemic heart disease.¹ Youth are considered a high-risk group in terms of smoking uptake. According to Statistics Canada, 14.8% of Canadian youth between 12 and 19 years of age smoked in 2003.² The Canadian Tobacco Use Monitoring Survey reported that 18% of youth aged 15-19 smoked in 2005.³ It is estimated that one third of smokers began smoking by the time they reached age 15.⁴ Additionally, according to one study, approximately 25% of youth aged 11-18, who had never smoked, were receptive to smoking (failed to state they would "definitely not" smoke).⁵

Favourable support exists for the effectiveness of social marketing to reduce and prevent tobacco use among youth.^{6,7} This article will report an intervention entitled, *Changing Social Norms: A Mass Media Campaign for Youth Ages 12 to 18 Years*. The objective of the intervention was to develop a mass media campaign within a social marketing framework to denormalize tobacco product use in youth. The intervention endeavoured to use a strengths-based approach to increase awareness of the dangers of tobacco use and empower youth to stay tobacco free. Within this article, social marketing is defined according to Andreasen's commonly used description:

*"The application of commercial marketing technologies to the analysis, planning, execution and evaluation of programs designed to influence the voluntary behavior of target audiences in order to improve their personal welfare and that of their society."*⁸

This includes using marketing principles that will persuade the target audience to reject, change, accept or discard a behaviour.^{9,10}

Participants and setting

The target population for this campaign included youth between the ages of 12 and 18 within the city of Calgary. The primary target of this campaign included youth who had experimented with tobacco products (1 to 100 cigarettes smoked). This group was targeted instead of the general population because campaigns tend to experience greater success when concentrating on a segmented audience,¹¹ and many failed campaigns may be a result of not targeting a specific population and their needs and interests.^{12,13} The campaign print material was further segmented to target junior high (grades 7-9) and senior high (grades 10-12) students separately by portraying adolescents in their age group.

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Sources of Support: Funding for the media campaign was provided by Health Canada Mass Media Activities under the Federal Tobacco Control Strategy. Evaluation for this campaign was conducted by Howard Research and Management Consulting and the creative design by Orange Door Communications and Global Television Creative Services. Community partners who contributed to the I Am the Owner of Me Campaign include Calgary Health Region in partnership with Health Canada, the Alberta Alcohol and Drug Addiction Commission (AADAC), Canadian Cancer Society, Calgary Urban Vibe and a local high school.

Table 1. *I Am the Owner of Me* Campaign Activities and Timeline

Phase of Social Marketing	Related Activities	Timeline
Phase 1: Planning and Strategizing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hired a project coordinator. Engaged community partners, established a steering committee to guide the project. Defined the project. Identified project barriers. Identified and analyzed the target audience. Collected baseline data. Developed interventions to address the behavioural goals. Identified existing resources (e.g., school programs) and their capacity to support and link with the media campaign. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> June to October 2005
Phase 2: Developing and Testing Messages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engaged youth to review existing messages and/or create new messages. Tested messages through focus groups and through the use of the Calgary Urban Vibe youth website. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> September to November 2005
Phase 3: Selecting Community Channels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conducted focus groups with youth to confirm whether the selected communication channels were well used by youth in Calgary. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> November to December 2005
Phase 4: Implementing the Campaign	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engaged youth in disseminating the messages through their involvement in tobacco reduction/prevention/cessation school programs. Evaluated the project process, impact, and clarity of messages. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> January 2006
Phase 5: Assessing Effectiveness (Evaluation)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> March to April 2006
Phase 6: Soliciting Feedback to Refine Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relied on the evaluation tools to modify and refine the messages, identify key learnings, and share the team's experiences with Health Canada and partnering agencies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> April to June 2006

Table 2. Respondents' Demographic Characteristics

Demographics	A		B		A+B		C		Total ABC	
	Pre- and Post-test Surveys (n=149)		Post-test Survey Only (n=48)		(n=197)		Baseline Only (n=143)		(N=340)	
		%		%		%		%		%
Junior high (grade 6 to 9)	118	79.3%	48	100%	166	84.2%	114	79.7%	280	82.4%
Senior high (grade 10 to 12)	31	20.7%	0		31	15.7%	29	20.3%	60	17.6%
Male	61	40.9%	26	54.2%	87	44.2%	70	49%	157	46.2%
Female	88	59.1%	22	45.8%	110	55.8%	73	51%	183	53.8%

Note: Tables 2-6 originated from Howard Research & Management Consulting. CHR Tobacco Control Strategy: Changing Social Norms. Calgary, AB: April 2006.

INTERVENTION

The *Best Practices for Comprehensive Tobacco Control Programs* from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends counter-marketing to counteract pro-tobacco marketing and promote health. Successful tobacco prevention efforts a) use media and community-based activities; b) are sufficient in duration; c) include messages on prevention, cessation and protection from second-hand smoke; d) utilize event sponsors; e) implement a number of messages using a variety of modes; and f) avoid authoritarian messaging.¹⁴ Although advertisements portraying strong negative emotional subject matter, negative or shocking messaging, and information about the health, cosmetic and social consequences are often alleged to be more successful than positive youth messages, there is limited evidence to support these claims.¹⁵⁻¹⁹ More effective campaigns tend to focus on personal stories, nicotine addiction, the effects of second-hand smoke, and the denormalization of tobacco use.¹⁹ Research also supports that dialogue about campaigns and the involvement of youth in the review and creation of messages increases campaign effectiveness.¹⁷⁻²⁰

Changing Social Norms: A Mass Media Campaign for Youth Ages 12 to 18 Years was established by the Calgary Health Region in partnership with Health Canada, Alberta Alcohol and Drug Addiction Commission, Canadian Cancer Society, Calgary Urban Vibe and a local high school to empower youth to stay tobacco free. The campaign featured positive messages such as "I am the owner of me... I choose to be tobacco free" on the print materials and "Together...youth are taking back their health, their power and their lives" in the television/radio campaign materials to increase awareness of the dangers of tobacco use, denormalize tobacco usage, and empower youth to choose to be tobacco free.

The campaign engaged Calgary's youth to understand their perception of benefits, barriers, and social norms with respect to tobacco use; determine their social cost of not using tobacco products; and define their opposition for not smoking. The campaign featured students from Calgary's junior high and senior high schools in television and radio public service announcements (PSAs). Table 1 identifies the project activities and timelines in relation to the six phases of a social marketing project.

The campaign evaluation was conducted by Howard Research and Management Consulting Inc. and included findings from pre-/post-campaign web surveys and focus group testing with two groups each of junior high and senior high school youth. In addition to these sources of data, key stakeholders involved in the development of the campaign were interviewed and web hits to a site endorsed by the mass media campaign were analyzed. Though the campaign ran from January-April 2006 (12 weeks), the evaluation only assessed the first 6 weeks of the campaign. (This was due to the reporting deadline set by the funder). Calgary Health Region provided additional funding to extend the 6-week campaign by 4 weeks and media partners provided 2 weeks of bonus time.

OUTCOMES

A total of 149 students completed the pre- and post-campaign survey. Overall 340 students completed a survey (either a pre, post or both surveys) over a 6-week time period (see Table 2 for further demographic information). According to the survey, 60% of participants remembered the "I Am the Owner of Me" slogan and 52% remembered hearing or seeing the advertisements on radio and/or television. Eighty percent of youth who had been exposed to the

Table 3. Percentage of Respondents Who Would Try to Convince a Smoker to Stop Smoking

Smoker	All Participants (N=149)			Ad Exposure		Smoking Status		Age	
	Pre	Post	Change	High Change (N=77)	Low Change (N=72)	Experimenter Change (N=41)	Non-exp Change (N=108)	Jr. High Change (N=118)	Sr. High Change (N=31)
A close friend	83.9%	82.6%	-1.3%	0%	-2.8%	0%	-1.9%	0.8%	-9.7%
A boyfriend or girlfriend	76.5%	78.5%	2%	2.6%	1.4%	-4.9%	4.6%	3.4%	-3.2%
Someone that you were interested in and wanted to date	53.7%	57.7%	4%	-1.3%	9.7%	0%	5.6%	6.8%	-6.5%
A younger sibling	86.6%	86.6%	0%	1.3%	-1.4%	7.3%	-2.8%	2.5%	-9.7%
An older sibling	79.2%	79.9%	0.7%	2.6%	-1.4%	9.8%	-2.8%	0.8%	0%
Someone else your age that you know	42.3%	48.3%	6%	7.8%	4.2%	7.3%	5.6%	8.5%	-3.2%
Someone else younger than you that you know	53%	52.3%	-0.7%	2.6%	-4.2%	2.4%	-1.9%	0.8%	-6.5%
Someone else older than you that you know	39.6%	45.6%	6%	9.1%	2.8%	7.3%	5.6%	6.8%	3.2%

Table 4. Percentage of Respondents Who Would Likely Listen to the Counsel of Others to Stop Smoking or Never Start

Counsellors	All Participants (N=149)			Ad Exposure		Smoking Status		Age	
	Pre	Post	Change	High Change (N=77)	Low Change (N=72)	Experimenter Change (N=41)	Non-exp Change (N=108)	Jr. High Change (N=118)	Sr. High Change (N=31)
A close friend	77.9%	71.1%	-6.7%	-6.5%	-6.9%	4.9%	-11.1%*	-10.2%**	6.5%
A boyfriend or girlfriend	73.8%	72.5%	-1.3%	6.5%	-9.7%	0%	-1.9%	-2.5%	3.2%
Someone that you were interested in and wanted to date	53%	50.3%	-2.7%	-1.3%	-4.2%	7.3%	-6.5%	-4.2%	3.2%
A younger sibling	61.1%	57%	-4%	-2.6%	-5.6%	2.4%	-6.5%	-5.9%	3.2%
An older sibling	73.2%	72.5%	-0.7%	1.3%	-2.8%	4.9%	-2.8%	-2.5%	6.5%
Someone else your age that you know	38.3%	34.2%	-4%	3.9%	-12.5%	4.9%	-7.4%	-4.2%	-3.2%
Someone else younger than you that you know	36.9%	34.9%	-2%	1.3%	-5.6%	7.3%	-5.6%	-3.4%	3.2%
Someone else older than you that you know	43.6%	45%	1.3%	10.4%	-8.3%	9.8%	1.9%	-0.8%	9.7%

* p<0.01

** p<0.001

posters indicated that they liked them and 85% said they liked the campaign PSAs.

The amount of change that could be measured between baseline and follow-up among the youth was limited as there were only six weeks between the pre- and post-test surveys. Therefore, this evaluation should be interpreted with caution. Still, the results may indicate that a higher portion of respondents tried to convince an older experimenting sibling to quit smoking at the time of the post-test survey compared to the pre-test survey. Though the absence of significant behaviour change is not surprising, the evaluation suggests that at the time of the post-test, most youth respondents were more likely to a) tell other experimenters not to smoke, b) support smokers to quit tobacco use, and c) listen to people who tell them about the benefits of being abstinent from tobacco (see Tables 3-5).

As the focus of the intervention was on non-smoking and experimental youth, evaluation results were not unexpected. The percentage of respondents who smoked three months before the pre-test survey was extremely low (1.3%). The percentage who intended to remain abstinent from tobacco within the three and six months after the pre-test was very high (85%). Although there was little change in the respondents' attitudes and behaviours, there were a greater number of students who became involved in delivering tobacco reduction/prevention programming at their schools after the post-test. Though this change may be credited to school

activities related to National Non-Smoking Week, this change may also be attributed to the campaign (see Table 6).

Following the launch of the campaign on January 16, 2006, CalgaryUrbanVibe.ca (website advertised through the campaign) experienced an immediate and sustained growth pattern in hits to the website as a whole and specifically to the health section. The overall site received over a 100% gain during the course of the campaign from mid-January (178 visitors/day) until the end of March (408 visitors/day). The health section of the website, where the core of the campaign materials were located, also saw greater than three-fold growth from early January (3.3 visitors/day) until the end of March (10.6 visitors/day).

Focus groups were conducted with two junior high schools (n=13) and two senior high schools (n=14). Junior high participants experienced difficulty recalling the campaign, whereas all senior high participants remembered the campaign. Though both age groups preferred negative ads in comparison to the positive messaging of the campaign, the senior high students indicated they could relate to the campaign, and that the positive message should be combined with other approaches (e.g., comedy, shock value, etc.). The junior high students indicated the positive message was less straightforward than the negative tobacco reduction messaging they encountered during the focus groups. Unfortunately, a weakness of the focus groups was that they were all conducted in the same quadrant of the city. Perhaps results would have differed

Table 5. Percentage of Respondents Who Would Try to Convince an Experimenter to Stop Smoking

Smoker	All Participants (N=149)			Ad Exposure		Smoking Status		Age	
	Pre	Post	Change	High Change (N=77)	Low Change (N=72)	Experimenter Change (N=41)	Non-exp Change (N=108)	Jr. High Change (N=118)	Sr. High Change (N=31)
A close friend	78.5%	74.8%	-4%	-1.3%	-6.9%	0%	-5.6%	-3.4%	-6.5%
A boyfriend or girlfriend	69.1%	69.1%	0%	3.9%	-4.2%	2.4%	-0.9%	0.8%	-3.2%
Someone that you were interested in and wanted to date	38.3%	36.2%	-2%	-3.9%	0%	2.4%	-3.7%	-0.8%	-6.5%
A younger sibling	87.9%	85.2%	-2.7%	-1.3%	-4.2%	4.9%	-5.6%	-5.1%	6.5%
An older sibling	64.4%	65.1%	0.7%	0%	1.4%	22.08%*	-7.4%	-2.5%	12.9%
Someone else your age that you know	24.8%	26.8%	2%	5.2%	-1.4%	7.3%	0%	2.5%	0%
Someone else younger than you that you know	40.3%	39.6%	-0.7%	2.6%	-4.2%	-2.4%	0%	-0.8%	0%
Someone else older than you that you know	20.8%	24.2%	3.4%	7.8%	-1.4%	9.8%	0.9%	4.2%	0%

* p<0.05

Table 6. Respondents' Involvement with Tobacco Reduction School Programming

School Programming	All Participants (N=149)			Ad Exposure		Smoking Status		Age	
	Pre	Post	Change	High Change (N=77)	Low Change (N=72)	Experimenter Change (N=41)	Non-exp Change (N=108)	Jr. High Change (N=118)	Sr. High Change (N=31)
A rule against using tobacco on school property or at school events	73.8%	73.8%	0%	5.2%	-5.6%	14.6%	-5.6%	-5.1%	19.4%
Taught about health problems due to smoking	76.5%	77.2%	0.7%	0%	1.4%	9.8%	-2.8%	-1.7%	9.7%
Has had 2 or more classes in the past 2 months about the health risks of smoking	39.6%	53%	13.4%***	22.1%*	4.2%	19.5%	11.1%	5.1%	45.2%**

* p<0.01

** p<0.001

*** p<0.05

if focus groups were conducted in different locations where there may have been more junior high student exposure to the advertisements.

Overall, the six stakeholders interviewed to discuss strengths, possible improvements and learnings from the campaign felt that the campaign was a success. All stakeholder representatives indicated the positive components of the campaign included funding, community involvement in the campaign, youth support, and a dedicated campaign coordinator. Difficulties the stakeholders experienced during the campaign included the tight timelines and working with two creative companies with different visions when developing the advertisements. Overall, the anecdotal feedback was positive and the stakeholders believed the strength-based messaging engaged the target audience and increased awareness of the benefits of staying abstinent from tobacco. Recommendations for future campaigns suggest that more realistic timelines should be implemented to meet the campaign objectives and a call to action to consumers needs to be more direct.

DISCUSSION

There were several learnings from this campaign. This evaluation would have been more effective if it were conducted over the entire course of the campaign instead of ending at the mandated 6 weeks after the pre-test, as specified by the funder. It was also difficult to evaluate this campaign due to the multiple modes of promotion.^{11,21} That being said, the evaluation respondents did suggest the recall of the campaign was strong. The Calgary Urban Vibe website hits increased dramatically when the campaign was launched.

Additionally, according to the survey, experimenting respondents appeared more likely to counsel others not to smoke. Senior high evaluation participants and those who had higher recall of the campaign also indicated they were more likely to listen to the benefits of abstinence from tobacco. There was also a higher recall of tobacco reduction efforts in their schools.

The evaluation highlights the importance of fund dedication to support tobacco prevention program development. As indicated through the final evaluation of this project, mass media could be successful at generating awareness; however, school or community program development can achieve greater behaviour and attitude change among this demographic.¹⁴ More time and resources should be dedicated to a stronger call to action in future campaigns. If this had been in place in the current study, the junior high students who participated in the focus groups might have received a clearer message. The campaign might also have benefited from presenting a larger scope of messaging, targeting specific segmented audiences beyond age group (e.g., targeting youth from different ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds). While the website was mentioned frequently, further exploration of contests, prizes and incentives related to the campaign might have generated greater awareness and perhaps driven more traffic to the website.

It is important to take into consideration the value of earned media. The campaign gained significant bonus time above and beyond the original 6-week timeline (2-week bonus time through most media partners and 4 additional weeks of funding from the Calgary Health Region), which allowed the campaign to run a total of 12 weeks (and longer with some media partners). This is impor-

tant because the more one is exposed to a message, the more likely it will be internalized.¹¹ While launching the mass media campaign during National Non-Smoking Week helped secure media exposure and community support, it did create challenges with the evaluation process (e.g., the pre-campaign web survey took place close to Christmas Break and during an immunization campaign in schools, and the post-campaign web survey/focus groups took place during Spring Break).

These challenges likely impacted the evaluation response rate while creating additional tension in order to meet stringent timelines.

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RÉSUMÉ

Objectif : Créer une campagne dans les médias afin de a) dénormaliser le tabagisme chez les jeunes de 12 à 18 ans, b) outiller les jeunes pour qu'ils sachent éviter les produits du tabac et c) sensibiliser le public aux dangers du tabagisme en utilisant des messages positifs.

Participants : Nous avons ciblé les jeunes de 12 à 18 ans.

Lieu : La campagne dans les médias a été créée, mise en œuvre et évaluée à Calgary.

Intervention : La campagne englobait des affiches dans les écoles et autres lieux fréquentés par les jeunes (centres communautaires, bibliothèques, centres de conditionnement physique, restaurants, cinémas), des affiches dans les transports en commun (abribus, abris du train léger sur rail, arrière des autobus), de la publicité imprimée, des communiqués à la télévision et à la radio, un site Web communautaire interactif pour les jeunes, un lancement médiatisé, des articles promotionnels et des efforts d'autopublicité intermédia. Le concept créatif a été mis au point à partir d'entrevues sur place, d'un sondage auprès de groupes cibles et de recherches menées par les créateurs de la campagne et par de jeunes bénévoles pour définir les principaux messages.

Résultats : En tout, 149 élèves ont répondu au sondage de base et au sondage de suivi pour évaluer les activités de marketing de la campagne. Vingt-sept jeunes ont participé à un essai du prototype de la campagne, dont le ton positif a été comparé à celui des campagnes de réduction du tabagisme au ton négatif. Six parties prenantes/partenaires ont accordé des entrevues pour faire part de leurs réflexions et des enseignements qu'ils ont tirés du déroulement de la campagne.

Conclusion : Selon les répondants aux sondages, la campagne a été bien accueillie, et ses messages ont été bien retenus.

Mots clés : marketing social; jeunes; réduction du tabagisme