

R U Over It ? A new campaign targeting "morning after" drink driving offences by young drivers.

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INTRODUCTION

With a road safety focus on organising alternative transport arrangements immediately after a big night out, little attention has been paid to educating drivers about the “morning after”. Current road safety advertising provides minimal and vague information on avoiding driving the day after a big night out.

Over 25% of drink drive offenders attending offender education programs run by the Drink Drive Prevention Team (DDPT) of Greater Southern Area Health Service (GSAHS), report having been caught the day after a big night out [1]. Pre-program evaluation results of the offender education programs suggest that attendees’ knowledge of how the body processes alcohol is generally poor. Surveying of community understanding of the issue also indicates that those interviewed did not have the skills to accurately calculate their blood alcohol concentration [2]. Police experience supports this finding.

The aim of this campaign was to increase awareness and knowledge among young drivers about one of the consequences of high-risk drinking - the effect on driving ability the following day. Utilising youth friendly advertising mediums, the campaign hoped to address the disconnection in the minds of young drivers between the night before and the next day, thereby reminding drinkers of the need to limit the length and intensity of a drinking session if needing to drive the next day.

METHOD

Following an independent evaluation of an earlier “morning after” campaign, a number of key recommendations were made for the development of future campaigns. These recommendations included:

- mak[ing] good use of free and easy to access mediums of communication;
- address[ing] the disconnection in the minds of young drivers between the night before and the next day; and
- advertis[ing] in places where the target audience make their decisions [2].

With interest shown from Leeton Shire Council to participate in the development and trial of new resources, the “R U Over It” campaign was developed. The format of the new campaign included a hand stamp for use in licensed venues, radio advertising, pamphlet, coaster, poster, facebook advertising and a website (www.ruoverit.com.au) to meet the above mentioned recommendations. The website provided drivers with an innovative online tool to accurately calculate their blood alcohol level after drinking.

Pre and post campaign surveys were conducted in the shire examining knowledge of alcohol elimination times; knowledge of morning after drink driving; and the amount of alcohol individuals consumed.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Post campaign survey results show improvements in all categories compared to pre campaign results, with:

- 42% of those surveyed now able to detail how many standard drinks of alcohol they regularly consume;
- a 30% improvement in drinkers’ knowledge of the issue of morning-after drink driving;
- a 52% increase in awareness of how the body processes alcohol including the time period required.

Advertising of the campaign via Facebook, youth friendly radio stations and road safety

professionals, who encouraged their own communities to view the website, has produced 1139 hits on the website between February & April 2010.

The current structure of the program enables immediate adoption by other agencies and Area Health Services to target similar issues in their communities. With all campaign materials now available on the website, the DDPT has been encouraging other organisations to source the materials from the website and distribute them at relevant events and educational opportunities. Road safety professionals, community drug actions teams and GSAHS Drug & Alcohol service staff are already distributing the resources at youth events and community activities where alcohol is served.

The low costs associated with internet based education make the project sustainable and easily modifiable.

CONCLUSIONS

The R U over It campaign has filled a gap in the existing road safety education for young drivers. The aim of the campaign was to

provide drivers with not only greater awareness of this problem but also the skills and tools to avoid performing the dangerous behaviour. Youth friendly mediums were chosen, in particular web based technologies, to reach the target audience. Initial evaluation indicates the campaign has succeeded in these aims. The additional benefit of this campaign is the accessibility of all the materials online. It is hoped that through making the campaign materials readily available, the campaign will become widespread and therefore familiar to young drivers, ensuring the message reaches this high risk group of road users.

REFERENCES

1. Fasch, K. 2009, 'Queanbeyan and Cooma Drink Drive Offender Program Mid-Year Evaluation January – June 2009' in possession of the Drink Drive Prevention Team, Greater Southern Area Health Service, Queanbeyan.
2. Colmar Brunton Social Research 2009, 'The Morning After the Night Before' Campaign Effectiveness Evaluation prepared for Greater Southern Area Health Services, in possession of the Drink Drive Prevention Team, Greater Southern Area Health Service, Queanbeyan.