



Abstract Title: Raising awareness of Canada's low-risk alcohol drinking guidelines

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Introduction

Alcohol consumption is imbedded in Canadian culture and continues to be an important public health issue (Public Health Agency of Canada, 2015; National Alcohol Strategy Working Group, 2007). In 2015, approximately 77% of Canadians over the age of 14 consumed alcohol in the past year (Statistics Canada, 2015). Alcohol use is likewise prevalent in the province of Prince Edward Island (PEI) with 74% of Islanders having reported drinking in the last year. To support Canadians in making healthy choices regarding alcohol use, an independent team of international experts developed the Canadian Low Risk Drinking Guidelines (LRDG) in 2011 (Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction). The launch of the LRDG in 2011 has provided a foundation for public education regarding safe drinking limits. Since many Canadians remain unaware of alcohol's implications on health, strategies are needed to raise population awareness of the LRDG (OECD, 2015). The objective of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of the "Should I Have Another?" public education campaign.

Objective

To evaluate the effectiveness of a population-based, public education campaign designed to increase awareness of the Canadian Low-Risk Alcohol Drinking Guidelines (LRDG).

Methods

A province-wide mass media campaign was implemented between June 2016 and April 2017. To measure campaign effectiveness, we completed a cross-sectional study using pre-campaign and post-campaign surveys. Measurements included awareness of the

LRDG, specific knowledge of the LRDG, and beliefs towards drinking and behavior change.

Results

Post-survey respondents were more likely to be aware of the LRDG (19.2% vs. 25.8%). However, increased awareness was largely driven by females being significantly more aware of the guidelines after the campaign. (Odds ratio [OR =1.74; 95% confidence interval [CI] =1.38, 2.19) Men were not found to be more aware post-campaign. The results did not show a significant increase in specific knowledge of the LRDG or change in beliefs towards drinking and behavior change after the campaign. Independent of the survey cycle, males and those aged 19-25 were less likely to be aware of the LRDG, select the correct drink limit or less, and believe that consuming alcohol in excess has short-term and long-term health consequences when compared to females and those aged 56-70.

Conclusion

A provincial public health education campaign was effective at increasing awareness of the LRDG, though uptake was lowest among those at highest-risk for heavy drinking.

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