



# Increasing awareness of sun protection among Australian adolescents: Results of a community-based intervention

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## Overview



Background

Objective of the study

Methods

Results

## Background



- Childhood and adolescence are most vulnerable periods for increasing skin cancer risk.
- 25 year of mass media and programs aimed at sun protective behaviours in Australia, sun protection practices among adolescents continue to decline.
- The adolescent characterised by long periods of exposure to UV radiation, high incidence of sunburns and positive views about sun tanning.

## Formative research findings



### **Six Behavioural Segments were identified :**

- Vigilant Defenders (positive attitude and behaviour);
- Forgetful Attempters (positive attitude but moderately positive behaviour)
- Risk Reducers (positive attitude but negative behaviour);
- Consciously Lazy (negative attitude and behaviour);
- Tan Seekers (negative attitude and behaviour); and
- Unaffected (neutral attitude and behaviour).

### **Forgetful Attempters**

(positive attitude but moderately positive behaviour)



### **Risk Reducers**

(positive attitude but negative behaviour)

## Forgetful Attempter Profile



***“If I get told I’ll do it, but otherwise I’ll forget”***

- Most sunburn/overexposure results from forgetfulness, or laziness, rather than an active attempt to obtain a tan.
- Relatively positive attitudes towards sun protection.
- Often engage in activities that cause them to forget about protection.

## Risk Reducer Profile



***“If you have a lower number (SPF) you get a better suntan”***

- They want to get a tan or sun bake, they first apply sunscreen to minimise their chances of burning.
- Aware of the damage the sun can cause to their skin but believe this is a more responsible way to tan.
- They are concerned with appearances.

## Objective

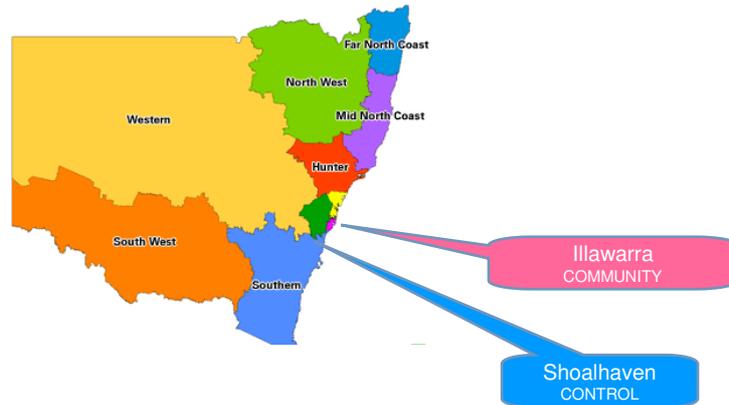


We conducted a community intervention in the Illawarra region of New South Wales Australia during January 2010.

The aims were to:

- promote awareness of the need for sun protection at the 'point of decision';
- communicate the key campaign messages in a fun and interactive format directed at the 2 segments; and
- engage young people in co-creation of the intervention, and provide 'cues to action'.

## Intervention community



## What is the campaign?



- Community campaign activities included:
  - UV sensitive wristbands (Reminder to sun protect)
  - UV photography at public beaches (Highlight damage to appearance)
  - Posters in teen friendly stores
  - Sun pouch 'giveaway packs'
  - Website

**DON'T LET THE SUN GET UNDER YOUR SKIN**



WHAT YOU SEE

WHAT YOU CAN'T SEE

UV light shows sun damage that you can't see... yet.  
The better you look after your skin now, the better you look for life.

**DON'T LET THE SUN GET UNDER YOUR SKIN**



## Methods



10 weeks after the intervention, community intercept surveys were conducted.

Effectiveness assessed through post-test differences between groups in:

- recall of sun protection messages; and
- self-assessed impact of the message on sun protection behaviours.

## Results



- A significantly higher proportion in the intervention community recalled seeing, reading or hearing messages about sun damage to the skin.
- 1 in 8 of those in the intervention community who recalled exposure to a sun protection message were able to accurately recall the main campaign message.

# Results



Question	Message Recalled	Intervention Community (n=47)	Control Community (n=26)	Z test for proportion
What was the main message in the material you saw, read or heard?	Ageing/wrinkling/sk in damage <sup>c</sup>	14.9 (7)	0 (0)	<b>1.654*</b>
	Sunscreen use	31.9 (15)	26.9 (7)	0.179
	Multiple ways to sun protect <sup>^</sup>	8.5 (4)	20 (5)	0.962
	Nothing healthy about a tan <sup>^</sup>	17 (8)	16 (4)	-0.149
	Slip slop slap*	14.9 (7)	19.2 (5)	0.149
	Skin cells in trauma <sup>^</sup>	2.1 (1)	3.8 (1)	-0.318
	Skin cancer	8.5 (5)	3.8 (1)	0.271
	Avoid sunburn	0 (0)	8(2)	1.179

<sup>c</sup> campaign specific

<sup>^</sup>message from current national mass media campaign

\*message from previous high-profile national mass media campaign

# Results



Question	Setting recalled	Intervention Community (n=67)	Control Community (n=34)	Z test for proportion
Where did you see or hear these messages?	Beach	49.3 (33)	32.4 (11)	<b>1.406*</b>
	Pool	17.9 (12)	14.7 (5)	0.125
	Sporting event	20.9 (14)	11.8 (4)	0.859
	Park or playground	17.9 (12)	14.7 (5)	0.125
	Shopping centre/shopping trolleys	34.3 (24)	41.2 (14)	0.308

\*significant at confidence level 90

## Results



- Individuals who recalled the specific message of the campaign thought the message was relevant to them (85.7%) and made them more likely to protect their skin from the sun.
- Other recalled messages received lower relevance and impact scores, e.g. 'nothing healthy about a tan' (75%) and use sunscreen (60%).

## Conclusions



- This was a small-scale pilot intervention conducted in a limited geographic area over a short period of time.
- However unprompted recall and high perceived relevance of the message suggest that a community-delivered message that focuses on short-term appearance effects of sun exposure may be an effective intervention for this hard-to-motivate adolescent group.

## Implications



- Use of an appearance-based **harm minimisation approach** for sun protection may allow social marketers to create strategies/messages more relevant to the concerns of adolescents (i.e., current appearance), and provide cues to action that can both promote and facilitate sun protection.

## References



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