

Why social marketing? Because knowledge is not enough to deter secondary supply of alcohol to minors

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Background

- 75% of Australian children having tried alcohol by the age of 12 (White and Smith, 2012)
- Nearly half of 17-year old males (46%) and more than a third of 17-year old females (37%) are considered regular drinkers
- Teenagers are increasingly drinking at risky levels, defined as consuming seven or more alcohol drinks on a single day for males, and five or more for females (White and Smith, 2012)
- Alcohol consumption by adolescents presents serious health and social problems unique to their age group (Lubman, Yucel and Hall, 2007; National Centre on Addiction and Substance Abuse, 2002)



- A significant factor contributing to underage drinking is the ‘secondary supply’ of alcohol to minors
- Parents are the most common source of alcohol supply for 12-17 year olds (NSW Department of Health, 2008)
- Secondary supply by parents for consumption in private settings is **legal** in most states of Australia including NSW (*Liquor Act 2007 No 90*)
- Supplying alcohol to minors has been associated with a range of parenting factors and behaviours – including parents’:
 - attitudes and actions towards alcohol and adolescents (Ryan et al. 2010)
 - disapproval of consumption by adolescents (van der Vorst, Engels, Meeus et al., 2006)
 - awareness of children’s peers and activities (Ryan et al, 2010)
 - parental modeling or descriptive norms (Foxcroft and Lowe, 1997; McCullum, 1990; van der Vorst, et al., 2006)

- Although these associations are supported by a substantial body of research, parents may not understand the extent to which they influence the drinking behaviour of their children (McCullum, 1990)
- Many adults still believe that supplying their teenage child with alcohol is an effective method to teach socially responsible drinking
- Supplying alcohol to 15 to 17 year old children in the home and under parental supervision is supported by half of Australian adults, with those on higher incomes even more likely to perceive this as an appropriate behaviour (63%) (BUPA, 2009)
- Perceived norms surrounding the drinking behaviours 'other parents' condone may influence parental attitudes (Gilligan, Kypri and Lubman, 2012)

The context

- The NSW Police Force, in partnership with the Central Coast Health Promotion Unit, developed a community-based intervention to address the issue of secondary supply of alcohol to minors
- ‘Supply Means Supply’ is a multi-faceted enforcement, education and advertising intervention targeting parents, carers and young people
- CHI undertook a series of research studies to assess community awareness of, and attitudes towards, secondary supply

Background – 20 focus groups



They get curious. It's better to have a controlled situation where they have a sip, rather than go and get it off their mate. (Parent, Dubbo)

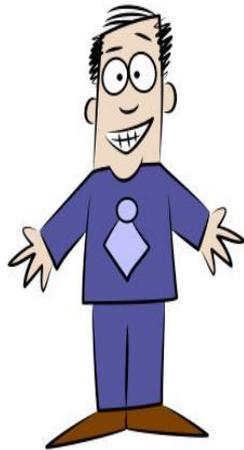
My younger sister absolutely scared the living daylight out of me, shit, I had no idea what to do with them and they were vomiting. (Young adult, 18-24, Penrith).



Method

857 participants

- 741 intercept surveys, 116 completed online
- Wollongong (34.5%), Dubbo (34.0%) and Penrith (31.4%)
- aged over 24 (40.3%), 18-24 (30.0%), and under 18 (29.6%)



Results

Do they know its illegal?

- Approximately 90% of respondents across all age groups knew that it is illegal for people under the age of 18 years to buy alcohol
- 77.2% knew that it is illegal to buy alcohol for someone who is under 18 years of age
- Most commonly, the penalty was thought to be a fine (321; 88.9%), other penalties commonly mentioned were jail or imprisonment (56; 15.5%) and criminal charges or a criminal record (18; 5.0%)
 - *in fact fines of \$1,100-\$11,000 can apply or jail time of up to 12 months*
- Less than one in five were confident that it is legal to buy alcohol for their own children (it currently is)

(When) would they buy alcohol for a 14 year-old?

Social Situation	Likely or very likely (%)
Party in your home	18.7
Family events	19.8
Dinner at home	17.6
Supervised party at a friend's house	13.3
Unsupervised party at a friend's house	8.0
Sporting event	6.5

- 78.8% said they were unlikely or very unlikely to provide alcohol to 14 year olds
- Parents and adults aged 24 and above much less likely to provide alcohol to a 14 year old relative than those in the 18-24 year old age group

BUT

- Much greater willingness to buy alcohol for a 17 year old minor

(When) would they buy alcohol for a 17 year-old?

Social Situation	Likely or very likely (%)
Party in your home	48.0
Family events	44.8
Dinner at home	40.8
Supervised party at a friend's house	43.3
Unsupervised party at a friend's house	29.3
Sporting event	18.9

- Respondents aged 18-24 were more likely than those aged 25+ to report they would buy alcohol for a 17 year old relative for:
 - a family event (68.7% vs 23.9%)
 - a supervised party at their house (67.8% vs 28.6%), or a friend's place (62.0%).
- The majority of minors stated that their parents were likely to provide alcohol in each case:
 - supervised party at their house (67.8%)
 - supervised house party at a friend's place (62.0%)
 - unsupervised party at a friend's house (52.2%)

Discussion

- It is apparent that parents and others in the community remain confused regarding the laws surrounding secondary supply to minors, particularly by parents to their children
- Legally, parents are not prohibited from providing alcohol to their own children, although they are advised against this by the National Health and Medical Research Council due to the negative health impacts of underage consumption.
- A significant number of adults were prepared to provide alcohol to underage relatives in a number of circumstances both at their home and to attend parties.
- It appears that knowledge that it is illegal to provide alcohol to children is insufficient to deter many adults, particularly those aged 18-24 from doing so.

- It is likely that this is influenced by the low perceived likelihood of penalties, as well as strong social norms around the permissibility of underage drinking.
 - approximately half of Australian adults approve of supplying alcohol to 15 to 17 year old children in the home and under parental supervision (BUPA, 2009);
 - perceived norms surrounding the drinking behaviours condoned by ‘other parents’ may influence parental attitudes (Gilligan, Kypri & Lubman, 2012).
- While it is not legally acceptable to provide minors with alcohol, it seems to be culturally and socially acceptable, and many community members seem to believe that this makes the law less important than other laws

- There is a need for interventions that got beyond informing the community that supplying alcohol to minors is illegal.
- We need to address the underlying attitudes and social norms that make underage alcohol consumption an accepted, and even encouraged, behaviour.
- Social marketing campaigns *can* produce positive changes in drinking behaviours (Stead et al, 2007).
- Importantly, successful interventions tend to be those that incorporate all the elements of social marketing rather than uni-dimensional 'education' or 'communication' campaigns.

- If social marketing is to make a contribution to addressing alcohol-related harms in our communities:
 - we need to move the conversation away from ‘problem’ drinkers and instead talk about our drinking cultures; AND
 - we need to shift the conversation – with the community and with governments – to the strategies that are effective (e.g., Anderson et al., 2009):
 - reducing the availability of alcohol,
 - increasing the price of alcohol, and
 - banning or adequately regulating the advertising and promotion of alcohol





Questions?



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