



Curtin University

DON'T DRINK & DROWN 2019 IMPACT EVALUATION

COLLABORATION FOR EVIDENCE, RESEARCH & IMPACT IN PUBLIC HEALTH



KEY FINDINGS

DON'T DRINK AND DROWN PROGRAM EVALUATION 2019

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This report presents the findings of an evaluation of the Don't Drink and Drown program from July 2017 to June 2019. The evaluation was conducted by the Collaboration for Evidence, Research and Impact in Public Health (CERIPH) at Curtin University, in Perth, Western Australia (WA).

The Royal Life Saving Society WA (RLSSWA) is funded by the WA Department of Health to coordinate Don't Drink and Drown, an alcohol and water safety drowning prevention program. The Don't Drink and Drown program was introduced by the RLSSWA in 2004 to address the issue of a growing number of young people drowning after consuming alcohol. The program aims to raise awareness amongst young people aged 15 to 24 years of the risks associated with consuming alcohol in aquatic environments.

In conjunction with RLSSWA, the CERIPH research team used a suite of tools to evaluate the program. This included: an online and intercept survey; paper-based surveys; interviews; Facebook and Google analytics; and electronic spreadsheets. The evaluation aimed to determine whether the program and its specific strategies were having an impact on awareness, knowledge, attitudes and behaviours of the target groups.

Key findings and considerations for future directions are outlined below.

Mass media campaign

Demographics of survey respondents

- Respondents were more likely to be female (78.7%); aged 18-21 (57.6%), Australian born (81.7%) and have completed year 12 (53.5%).
- More than half of respondents (62.8%) considered themselves competent swimmers. There was no significant difference in perceived swimming ability by gender.
- Almost a third of respondents reported low (32.7%) alcohol consumption and half indicated moderate (48.3%) alcohol consumption; males were more likely to consume alcohol at high-risk levels.

Awareness and key messages

- Almost half (45.4%) of respondents recalled seeing, hearing or reading any advertising about water-based activities and alcohol in the last six months, most commonly on Facebook (50.5%) and television (48.5%). Interestingly Facebook overtook television as the most recalled medium, with television recall on the decline. In addition, radio recall continues to be high despite no radio advertisements in the current suite of media.

- Unprompted recall of the “Dancer” advert was 64.2%, a significant increase from D4 (41.2%).
- More than half (59.6%) of respondents recognised the ‘Dancer’ television advertisement when prompted, a significant increase from D4 (48.6%).
- Almost three quarters (73.0%) of those who recognised the campaign, reported that the message was to *not drink and swim* or *not to drink alcohol around water* (D4 63.9%). A further 19.3% quoted the slogan ‘*Don’t drink and drown*’ (D4 28.4%).
- Of those who could recall the campaign slogan (55.5%), almost all (89.7%) mentioned ‘*Don’t Drink and Drown*’ (D4 88.5%).
- Advertising diagnostics related to the ‘Dancer’ television suggested that males were more likely to report that the ad told them something *new* (male 48.8%; female 36.1%) but less likely to *believe* the ad (male 85.7%; female 91.8%) or *talk to friends about it* (male 52.4%; female 62.1%).
- Respondents were asked to comment on the influence of the advertisement on behavioural intention.
 - The proportion of those who intended *not to drink before swimming* (D5 24.7% compared with D4 32.0%) and those who intended to *be more careful/responsible* (D5 24.7% compared with D4 34.7%) decreased.
 - Conversely, the proportion of those who had behavioural intentions pertaining to the safety of friends increased. Specifically *looking after friends when they are under influence of alcohol/ensuring friends don’t drink and swim* (D5 23.5% compared with D4 6.7%) and *educating friends* (D5 14.1% compare with D4 5.3%).
- Recognition of the Don’t Drink and Drown bus stop advertisement (8.8%) continues to follow a downward trajectory (D4 12.3%).
- The Don’t Drink and Drown Program continues to have strong recognition with over three quarters of respondents recognising the program (77.6%); recognition amongst females is particularly high (female 81.3%, male 64.6%).

Knowledge and attitudes

- Alcohol remained the factor ranked most likely to contribute to drowning (77.4%), a significant increase from D4 (71.3%). Females were significantly more likely than males to rank alcohol as the leading factor (80.0% and 67.2%, respectively) contributing to drowning. Males were significantly more likely to identify illicit drugs as the main factor (male 17.2% compared with female 9.1%).
- The perceived benefits and costs of drinking and swimming appear to have remained consistent with D4, with no significant difference. Around a third of respondents thought it was **likely** they would *be having fun* if drinking and participating in water-based

activities (D5 37.4% D4 32.1%). A quarter believed it was **likely** they would feel more relaxed (D5 24.6%, D4 24.3%). Almost two thirds thought it was **likely** that drinking and participating in water-based activities would *increase the chance of injury/accident* (D5 61.2 D4 61.4%).

- Consistent with D4 (50.5%), more than half of respondents (51.6%) believed their partner was **unlikely** to approve of them drinking and participating in water-based activities. Those aged under 18 were significantly more likely to hold this belief (81.8%).
- A similar proportion of respondents at D5 (22.5%) and D4 (22.5%) believed that it was **likely** their friends would approve of them drinking and participating in water-based activities. However, those aged under 18 years were significantly less likely to believe this (4.2%).
- Almost 80% of respondents (77.7%) believed that that it was **unlikely** their parents would approve of them drinking and participating in water-based activities (D4 73.8%). This significantly decreased for those aged 22 -24 years old (69.5%) compared to those younger (15 - 17 years 83.3%, 18 – 21 years 83.2%).
- Over half of respondents (54.1%) disagreed that most people *similar to them* drink alcohol and participate in water-based activities. This is a significant difference from D4 (44.4%).

Behaviours

- Over half of respondents (56.7%) stated that they had NOT consumed alcohol and participated in water-based activities in the last 12 months compared to almost two-thirds at D4 (64.0%). This is a significant difference.
- Consistent with D4 findings, around two thirds of respondents (65.5%) indicated their intention to NOT drink and participate in water-based activities in the next six months.
- Of those who had consumed alcohol and participated in water-based activities (43.0%), just under a third (31.9%) reported consuming one or two standard drinks; almost a third (30.9%) reported consuming three or four standard drinks; and one-fifth (18.5%) had consumed five or six standard drinks on that occasion. There was a reduction in the number who had consumed 10 standard drinks (D5 4.8%, D4 8.1%) however it was not significant.



FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS

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CONSIDERATIONS FOR FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Based on key findings, there are a number of opportunities and considerations for future iteration of Don't Drink and Drown and/or the newly badged drowning prevention programs for young people in Western Australia. These are outlined below.

1. Consolidate subtle shifts in social norms that reaffirm alcohol as a significant risk factor contributing to drowning in all forms of message dissemination.
2. Consider advocacy for supportive policy and environmental strategies to reduce reliance on media and education to combat the pervasive impacts of the aquatic alcoholic environment.
3. Continue to explore opportunities to broaden the socio-demographic composition of the sample and geographic recruitment processes to include those from culturally diverse backgrounds and recruitment from other aquatic locations;
4. Consider formative work stratified by gender to interrogate and explore knowledge, attitudes and beliefs and which focuses on risk-taking culture, particularly amongst males;
5. Undertake a state-wide attitudes and behaviours survey of young West Australians (15-24 years) in regard to risk-taking and safety in and around the water to support the establishment of a more comprehensive baseline picture;
6. Follow a cohort of young Western Australians for a longer time period to allow for more rigorous reporting of the behavioural outcomes associated with the Don't Drink and Drown campaign or any new campaign aimed at young Western Australian adults;
7. Explore social media and website usage to engage other cohorts.
8. Explore changing intentions particularly as they relate to social influence on behaviour (e.g. the role of culture, social connection versus the role of expert knowledge)
9. Continue to explore strategies to achieve greater reach of the whole target group including:
 - a. younger people (under 18 years) via school curriculum and building links with schools from a range of sociodemographic profiles
 - b. those over the age of 18 via pubs and clubs
 - c. include diverse aquatic locations e.g. water themed parks, inland waterways, regional areas and those on and proximate to the WA coastal strip;

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