

# THIS MUCH? FORMATIVE RESEARCH FOR A NEW DROWNING PREVENTION CAMPAIGN FOR KIDS

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This poster presents the preliminary results of the formative research underpinning the Royal Life Saving Society WA 'This Much' media campaign.

## ABSTRACT

Children under five years are an at-risk group for drowning requiring the development of evidence informed drowning prevention strategies. Formative research was undertaken to guide a child drowning prevention campaign using a theory based approach. Seven focus groups were conducted using a convenience sample of the primary target group. Interviews were transcribed and qualitative content analysis was undertaken. Preliminary results suggested high comprehension and acceptance, with improvements required to casting and cues to action. Successful campaigns are underpinned by theory based formative evaluation. This research adds to the small body of literature that acknowledges the important contribution of campaign design and execution to prevent drowning in young children.

## INTRODUCTION

- ◊ Globally the impact of drowning is significant, with children under five years at heightened risk.
- ◊ There is a paucity of published literature on the development, implementation and evaluation of drowning prevention initiatives and a lack of theory based programs.
- ◊ Mass media campaigns form part of the Keep Watch toddler drowning prevention program in Western Australia (WA).
- ◊ Formative research was required to inform the development of a new toddler drowning prevention mass media campaign.
- ◊ This project provided an opportunity to create a research-practice partnership between a non-government organisation and a university based research centre, and guide a new media strategy using a theory based approach.

## RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- ◊ Assess campaign message comprehension, acceptability and attractiveness.
- ◊ Determine the potential effectiveness of messages in facilitating behaviour change.
- ◊ Improve campaign messages for dissemination.
- ◊ Map behavioural theory against messaging in a child drowning prevention campaign.

Figure 1. Stills from the video shown to participants



Figure 2. Stills from the advertisement launched December 2014



## METHODS

- ◊ Seven focus groups were conducted using a convenience sample of parents and care-givers of children aged under five years (total n=56) in metropolitan and regional WA.
- ◊ A 30 second video was presented twice. The execution was developed in 2011 by an advertising agency for an online water safety project. The execution involved a number of celebrities who discussed the amount of water a child could drown in. The words "this much" were repeated throughout the execution. Black and white imagery was used, with only headshots of celebrities used.
- ◊ Health belief model and social cognitive theory were used to guide question development.
- ◊ Open ended questions were posed to determine key messages, comprehension, acceptability, style, and relevancy.
- ◊ Audio recordings were transcribed and preliminary qualitative content analysis was undertaken.
- ◊ Ethics approval was obtained from the Curtin University Human Research Ethics Committee (approval number SPH-44-2014).

## RESULTS

### DEMOGRAPHICS

- ◊ Care-giver status: n=54 parent, n=1 parent/care-giver, n=1 grandparent.
- ◊ Location: n=49 metropolitan, n=7 regional.
- ◊ Age (years): 18-24 (5.4%), 25-34 (n=62.5%), 34-44 (28.6%), 45-54 (1.8%), 55-64 (1.8%).
- ◊ Birth country: Australian born (67.9%), overseas born (32.1%).
- ◊ Highest education: Less than year 12 (12.7%), Year 12 (16.4%), TAFE/diploma (36.4%), university/college (34.5%).

### COMPREHENSION

- ◊ Key message take out= the amount of water a child could drown in and to be aware of potential water hazards.

Figure 3. Key message take out from the video.



### ACCEPTANCE

- ◊ Considered a believable message, addressing a misconception about the depth of water a child can drown in.

*"The misconception...that...what you think they could drown in, it's actually a lot less"*  
(Group 1)

- ◊ Considered to be generally relevant for all ages, ethnicities, care-giver status, and geographies. Often thought to be personally relevant because a water hazard from the video was in their home.
- ◊ Highlighted water hazards not readily associated with drowning.
- ◊ However, a question was raised about the age that the water depth applied to.

## CONCLUSION

Findings from the research suggested the need to:

- ◊ Review the desired key communication objectives.
- ◊ Retain the 'this much' message, use of repetition and black and white imagery.
- ◊ Consider whether the advertisement needs to make it clearer that the messages are applicable for children aged 0 to 4 years.
- ◊ Provide examples of a wide variety of water hazards.
- ◊ Use multiple people, who are representative of the community, to communicate the message. Parents should be included in the campaign.
- ◊ Include a clear call to action at the end of the advertisement.
- ◊ Develop educational resources to support the campaign and if possible, direct viewers to where they should go for additional information. Ensure resources are available through a variety of sources.

### STYLE

- ◊ Simple, straight to the point and generally liked.
- ◊ Hand gesture provided a measure of water depth.
- ◊ Repetition of hand gesture and "this much" assisted message recall and reinforced it.
- ◊ Black and white imagery was seen to stand out and provide a point of differentiation from other advertisements. It was also thought to increase the seriousness of the issue.
- ◊ A few participants felt it was uninteresting and would not stand out.

### CASTING

- ◊ Using males and females to deliver the message was well received.
- ◊ Considered to lack cultural diversity and required a broader range of people.
- ◊ Mixed responses to the use of celebrities. Of note, comprehension remained the same when an individual was not known.
- ◊ Parents considered easier to relate to, credible and trustworthy. Other suggested people to include were: medical and childcare professionals; newsreaders; sports people; family members; and someone who had experienced a fatal or non-fatal drowning.

### CUES TO ACTION

- ◊ Mixed responses to the likely impact of the video.
- ◊ Thought to increase awareness of water hazards.
- ◊ Highlighted hazards not previously thought of by some.
- ◊ *"That ad made me think about water that's around everywhere which I'd never thought of before"* (Group 3)
- ◊ However, without prompting, some did not extend their consideration of hazards beyond those within the video.
- ◊ Some requested the need for additional information/resources.