

Pick-a-Skipper: an evaluation of a designated driver program to prevent alcohol-related injury in a regional Australian city

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Abstract

The 'Community Mobilization for the Prevention of Alcohol-Related Injury' (COMPARI) project undertook a designated driver intervention for young adults, known as 'Pick-a-Skipper', in the regional Western Australian city of Geraldton, which has a population of ~25 000. The first component of the program was a television advertising campaign encouraging people to 'Pick-a-Skipper' if they were going out to drink. The second component of the program comprised a promotion targeting nightclub patrons. The drivers of two or more passengers were provided with free soft drink all night by the nightclub. The 'Pick-a-Skipper' campaign succeeded in persuading a significant number of those young Geraldton drinkers, who were intending to drive to and from their location of drinking, to select non-drinking drivers as 'Skippers' before they began consuming alcohol. It was also found that the mass media component was much more important in the success of the program than the on-site licensed premises component; that males

were significantly less likely to select a 'Skipper' and more likely to undertake high-risk-taking behaviour; that inaccurate knowledge about 'Skippers' was also associated with high-risk-taking behaviour and accurate knowledge of the 'Skipper' concept was associated with increased frequency of 'Skipper' selection; and that passengers defined as 'high-risk takers' are more likely to increase their consumption of alcohol if they have designated a driver. The study indicates that an extensive media campaign, providing positive images and utility knowledge on designating a non-drinking driver, can have a significant impact on drinking and driving behaviour in a local community.

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