Advocacy and Communication of Health Risks: Examples from Tobacco Control

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Overview of Presentation
(Evidence from Tobacco Control)

1. What factors determine the success or failure of public communication campaigns targeting individual behaviors?

2. What impact can health risk messages have on support for policies to remedy those threats?
What factors determine the success or failure of public communication campaigns targeting individual behaviors?
When Do Health Risk Campaigns Work?

1. When they focus on BEHAVIORS and THEIR CONTEXT, *not necessarily* health risks per se
   - Identify the intention(s) and behavior(s) you want to change, then work backward
### TABLE 2—Relationship Between Beliefs and Smoking Behavior Among Florida Teens

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Beliefs about cigarette companies (agreement unless noted)</th>
<th>Smoked in Past 30 Days, OR (95% CI)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cigarette companies lie</td>
<td>0.20* (0.07, 0.56)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cigarette companies try to get young people to start smoking</td>
<td>0.24* (0.08, 0.71)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cigarette companies deny that cigarettes are addictive</td>
<td>0.78 (0.27, 2.23)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cigarette companies deny that cigarettes cause cancer and other harmful diseases</td>
<td>0.87 (0.33, 2.29)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beliefs about the social effects of smoking (agreement unless noted)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smoking cigarettes makes people your age look cool or fit in (disagree)</td>
<td>0.73 (0.22, 2.41)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonsmokers don’t like to date someone who smokes</td>
<td>0.96 (0.40, 2.29)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smoking is a way to show others you’re not afraid to take risks (disagree)</td>
<td>0.33 (0.10, 1.12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young people who smoke cigarettes have more friends (disagree)</td>
<td>0.71 (0.18, 2.90)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beliefs about the physical effects of smoking (agreement unless noted)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is safe to smoke for only a year or 2, as long as you quit after that (disagree)</td>
<td>0.41 (0.12, 1.32)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People who smoke regularly have a much harder time keeping up in sports</td>
<td>0.49 (0.15, 1.64)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smoking cigarettes can help keep your weight down (disagree)</td>
<td>0.40 (0.14, 1.16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One out of 3 people who start smoking by age 18 will die because of smoking</td>
<td>0.54 (0.21, 1.41)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TRUTH Campaign Theory

When Do Health Risk Campaigns Work?

1. When they focus on BEHAVIORS and THEIR CONTEXT, not necessarily health risks per se

2. When they achieve frequent, widespread exposure for many sources over time
   - Anti-tobacco campaigns – 4 to 10+ ads/month
   - Messages/campaign goes away – so do effects

Florida TRUTH Campaign

Index of Campaign-Targeted Beliefs

Month

Apr-98 Sep-98 Feb-99 Jul-99 Dec-99 May-00

actual
predicted, without budget cuts
predicted, without budget cuts or Legacy

Budget Cuts
Legacy truth

Intentions to Avoid Trying Cigarettes

Month

Apr-98 Sep-98 Feb-99 Jul-99 Dec-99 May-00

80% 85% 90% 95% 100%

actual
predicted, without budget cuts
predicted, without budget cuts or Legacy

Budget Cuts
Legacy truth

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3. When the social and policy environment provides additional opportunities and motivation for change
   - Tobacco examples: taxes, indoor smoking bans, restrictions on cigarette marketing

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4. When they take the socio-economic context of the behavior into consideration in message design
Relationship between levels of education and recall of Wisconsin tobacco cessation ads emphasizing HOW to quit

HOW to Quit versus WHY to Quit

Sources:
- Brewer NT, Hall MG, Noar SM. (2016). Effect of pictorial cigarette pack warnings on changes in smoking behavior: A randomized clinical trial. JAMA Internal Medicine, 176(7), 905-912.
Source: Niederdeppe, et al. (2011). Socioeconomic variation in response to campaign advertisements to promote smoking cessation. *Social Science and Medicine, 72*, 773-780.
What impact can health risk messages have on support for policies to remedy those threats?
Can Health Risk Messages Change Policy?

Can Health Risk Messages Change Policy?

• News media attention to health risks can promote increased legislative attention to these issues and local policy action

• Exposure to state tobacco cessation campaigns emphasizing secondhand smoke are associated with increased support for clean indoor air laws

Sources: