

The Alcohol and Breast Cancer Connection

Exploring Messaging and Communication Channels
that Resonate with Undergraduate Women



Presented by
Jane L. McCarthy, MSc, MPH
Parent Action on Drugs
jmccarthy@parentactionondrugs.org

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Background: Rationale

- **Low awareness** of dose-response causal association between alcohol and female breast cancer, despite convincing evidence
- **Undergraduate females 18-22 may be at increased risk due to:**
 - High exposure
 - Vulnerable stage of breast tissue development
- **Need to increase awareness:** the more alcohol a woman consumes over her lifetime, and perhaps most significantly at a younger age, the higher her risk for breast cancer

Background: Objectives of the Study

- **Identify types of messaging** about the connection between alcohol and breast cancer risk that resonate with undergraduate females to influence awareness and intentions around alcohol consumption
- **Develop an implementation-ready message/ad** to be used in an awareness campaign
- **Identify best communication channels** to reach target audience with a campaign

Methods

- **Qualitative focus group study** conducted in K-W area (summer/fall 2017); Four groups (n=31); 1.5 hour duration; \$20 gift cards; lunch or dinner provided
- **UW, Laurier U, and Conestoga College students recruited** (Eligibility: female, enrolled, 18-22 years, drink alcohol)
- **Three concept messages tested:** attention, comprehension, motivation, relevance, and appropriateness (close- and open-ended questions)

Three Concept Awareness Ads

Every **drink** is a **choice**.



DID YOU KNOW?

Alcohol is a **carcinogen** that can cause **breast cancer**.

Less than one standard drink every day can increase **lifetime risk**.

One **standard drink** is less than you think.

IF YOU CHOOSE TO DRINK, THINK NO MORE THAN ONE AND BE DONE.

To learn what "a standard drink" is and how to reduce health risks visit, www.rethinkyourdrinking.ca

How much you **drink** now matters **later**.



DID YOU KNOW?

Alcohol & breast cancer - the more you drink, the greater your **lifetime risk**.

As little as three standard drinks per week has been shown to **increase the risk**.

Even if you stop drinking later, drinking patterns now raise your risk forever.

EVERY DRINK, ANYTIME, COUNTS. USE THE FREE "SAYING WHEN" APP TO TRACK YOUR DRINKING AND REDUCE YOUR RISK.

www.sayingwhen.com

Cheers to **women** making good choices about **alcohol**.



DID YOU KNOW?

Drinking **alcohol** is a causal risk factor for **breast cancer**.

The more you drink over your lifetime the **greater your risk**.

It's not just heavy drinking — even less than one standard drink a day can **increase your risk**.

SHARE WITH ALL THE WOMEN IN YOUR LIFE WHAT A STANDARD DRINK IS AND TIPS FOR LOWERING RISK AT:

www.cancer.ca/en/prevention-and-screening/live-well/alcohol/

Methods (cont'd)

- Conducted educational session about alcohol and breast cancer relationship after testing (10 minute)
- Pre/post assessments: knowledge/beliefs about connection, and its impact on intentions around current and future drinking (immediately prior to start and at end of 1.5 hour FG)
- Analyses: percentage tabulations, thematic analysis, and difference of proportions
- Revised “most preferred” message theme and elements based on FG results; re-tested two new versions on small group of study participants (6/31) to confirm preferred elements

Results: Participants

- Mean age: 20.25 yrs.
- 29% lived on campus, 52% lived off-campus, 19% lived at home
- Most students from UW (n=22)
- Various fields of study
- No Hx of 1st degree female relative with breast cancer; 1/3 had Hx of 2nd degree

Results: Overall Message Preference



Results: Thematic Analysis

Themes around effectiveness:

- **Design Features** (images; bubbles)
- **Credibility** (high enough risk stat, e.g., 30% increased risk or more)
- **Relatability** (who, where, what, how, frequency)
- **Clarity** (connection must be clear at start—e.g., pink, female form; “causal” confused with “casual”)



“Having a glass of wine every single day isn’t probably the way students consume their alcohol.”

“How much risk, is it 2% or 50% increase? How worried should I be about how much I drink now?”

Results: Thematic Analysis

- **Emotional Response** (judgement averse; requires seriousness, e.g. **carcinogen v. causes cancer**)
- **Intention to Act** (reduce v. abstain)
- **Accessibility of additional information** (URLs not good for posters; **prefer apps**)



"...alcohol is a carcinogen... when I read that I was shocked."

"I like the app... it's helping you think about what you're drinking, you know, keep track of it, make sure you're not going overboard."

Final Versions

Alcohol and Breast Health...

How much you **drink** now matters **later**.



DID YOU KNOW?

Alcohol is a **carcinogen** that fuels estrogen which drives the growth of **breast cancer** cells.

8 standard drinks a week, before first pregnancy, may **increase** breast cancer **risk** by over **30%**.

The more you drink over your **lifetime** the greater the **risk** — **harmful effects** of drinking in your teens and 20's **last**.



EVERY DRINK, AT ANY TIME COUNTS. USE THE FREE "SAYING WHEN" APP TO TRACK YOUR DRINKING AND REDUCE YOUR BREAST CANCER RISK.



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Results: Communication Channels

- **Social media is the best channel— Instagram #1**
- **Strategically placed posters** also deemed very useful:
 - High-traffic campus areas not competing with other posters: **outside of lecture halls, inside bathroom stalls, in elevators, campus residence buildings**
 - On- and off-campus where alcohol can be consumed and/or purchased.
- **Doctors and nurse practitioners** rated most impactful inter-personal messengers (55%)



Results: Knowledge/Intentions

Significantly greater proportion of participants showed increases in:

- ✓ **Knowledge** that alcohol consumption has the **most significant connection** to female breast cancer compared to other lifestyle/nutritional factors
- ✓ **Knowledge** that it is a dose-response relationship: **any amount most days can increase risk**
- ✓ **Intention to re-think whether, and how much, to drink now and in the future**

Discussion: Key Highlights

- Confirmed **low awareness** about alcohol-breast cancer connection prior to participation
- Even though potential consequence (i.e., breast cancer dx) is in distant future, **students were very interested, wanted to share info, and indicated it would affect current and future consumption** (at least they're thinking about it!)
- Critical to **ensure relatability** to specific audience when choosing **images** and **framing risk behaviour**

Discussion: Message Design/Development

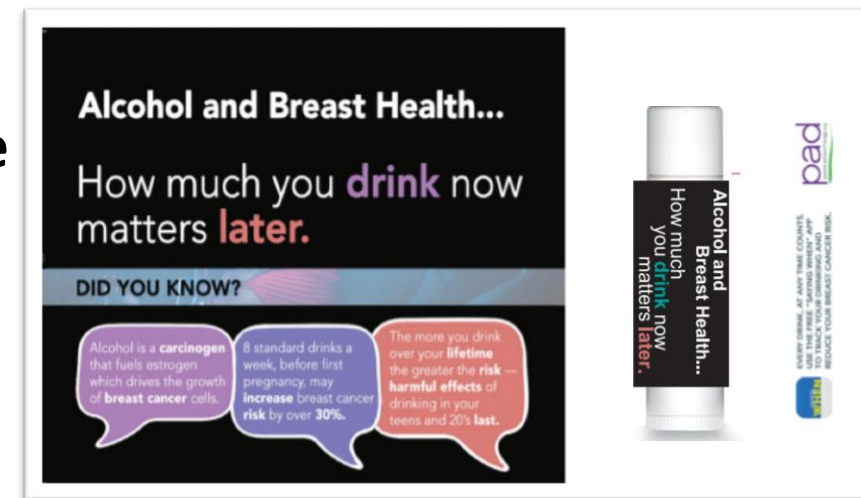
- Recommend that messages include these important elements:
 - **Numerical relative risk statistics** to boost credibility
 - Should be **significantly large** enough to warrant caring, as defined by your audience
 - **Words that elicit a more serious emotional response**
 - **Easy to remember and access resources/tools** to promote seeking additional knowledge and reducing risk

Discussion: Message Delivery

- **Messages/ads need to be adaptable for social media** (GIF, or multiple static messages posted over a defined period of time, e.g., 1x/week for three weeks)
- **Print is not dead!** Students do look at posters in strategic places
- **Routine screening** for alcohol consumption by **campus primary care providers** and initiating conversations about cancer risk (posters in exam rooms, provide handouts, etc.) could be effective strategy to reduce consumption

What's next?: Getting the message out

- **Awareness ads** printed and ready to be posted on campus at participating schools
- **A GIF version** of the ad has been created for social media
- **Promotional items** (i.e., scroll pens and lip balms) with an accompanying info palm card
 - To be distributed to campus health services **primary care providers, women's sports teams and clubs, and at student health fairs** on campus
 - Potential to include in **freshman packets** in the fall if residence life interested



To Learn More...

- Project video link
<https://vimeo.com/252223457>
- Let us know what you think and if you share it with colleagues as a knowledge exchange tool.
- For project report:

<http://parentactionondrugs.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/15K-Final-Project-Report-Summary.pdf>



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Questions



Jane McCarthy

jmccarthy@parentactionondrugs.org

Sandra Gibson

sgibson@uwaterloo.ca

