

This section provides an overview of the research context, design, findings and recommendations.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 Background and objectives

The National Skin Cancer Awareness Campaign, which ran during Summer 2006/07 and Summer 2007/08, aimed to educate Australians about the importance of protecting themselves from skin cancer. The primary target audience was teenagers aged 13-17 years and young adults aged 18-24 years. Ipsos-Eureka Social Research Institute was commissioned to conduct research to evaluate the effectiveness of this campaign.

1.2 Research design

Four online surveys were conducted, one prior to the launch of the campaign in November 2006, one after the conclusion of the first phase of the campaign in February 2007, and one prior to and after the second phase of the campaign, conducted in November 2007 and February 2008. In each survey, the research involved around 1,000 interviews with 14-17 year olds and 1,000 interviews with 18-24 year olds. The first two surveys also included a similar number of parents.

1.3 Methodological limitations

When measuring sun protection behaviours, it is likely that the prevailing weather conditions will be very influential. The average temperature was higher in the February surveys than the November surveys. Furthermore, there was significantly more rain in many states in February 2008 compared with February 2007.

The impact of weather variation needs to be taken into account when interpreting the results. For example, given that seasonal variation should be expected in tanning behaviour, and it is also likely to be influenced by weather conditions, the impact of the campaign on tan-seeking is difficult to assess. Likewise, the proportion being burnt in summer is likely to be higher than

the proportion reporting being burnt in spring. This, coupled with significant weather variation between February 2007 and February 2008, makes it difficult to determine the influence of the campaign on burning.

1.4 Impact of campaign on behaviours

Tan-seeking and sunburn

The research found that deliberate tanning was lower in February 2008 (29% among teenagers and 39% among young adults) than it had been the previous summer (42% among teenagers and 46% among young adults). This is likely to be at least partly because of the wet weather in many states in February 2008. However, given that the proportion of teenagers who said that they had tried to get a suntan in the last fortnight dropped from 39% in November 2006 to 33% in November 2007 (i.e. when the weather was reasonably consistent), it is probable that the campaign has had some impact on deliberate tanning.

There was a similar pattern of results with burning. Among both teenagers and young adults, fewer reported burning in the last fortnight between February 2007 and February 2008, probably due at least in part to the increased rainfall. However, the incidence of burning among teenagers dropped from 56% prior to the campaign to 48% at the same time the following year. This indicates that the campaign is likely to have produced a positive effect. Even so, there were still over half of teenagers (53%) and nearly two thirds (63%) of young adults who report burning in the last fortnight in February 2008.

Sun protection behaviours

Comparing the baseline and the post-campaign results, there have been significant increases in the target audiences' adoption of sun protection:

- Reported use of **clothing** to protect the skin from the sun has increased for both teenagers and adults. Among teenagers, there was an increase in the reported use of protective clothing after the first phase of the campaign, and further improvements were attained by February 2008. Prior to the campaign, 37% of teenagers said that they usually or always wear clothing that protects their skin when outdoors on a typical summer's day. This increased to 48% by February 2008. Among young adults, the corresponding increase was from 37% to 44%.
- Teenagers' use of **shade** usually or always went from 33% in November 2006 to 42% in February 2008. There was a significant increase in use of shade among 18-24 year olds between November 2007 and February 2008, although the pattern of results over the four surveys suggests there has not been a dramatic change over time.

- Teenagers' and young adults' use of **sunscreen** on the face and body improved between each November and February survey. For example, the proportion of 18-24 year olds reporting that they use sunscreen on the body usually or always when outdoors on a typical summer day went from 38% in the baseline survey to 49% in February 2008. The effect of the campaign and seasonal variation in sunscreen use are confounded, so it is difficult to assess to what extent the campaign has had an impact on sunscreen use.

There have been several significant improvements in the adoption of specific forms of sun protection in various situations. Some of these changes (eg. when there are observed increases between the November and February surveys) may be strongly influenced by the time of year that the data were collected. Nonetheless, there were significant increases in the use of sun protection in specific situations from one November to the next, and/or one February to the next, which provide strong evidence that the campaign has influenced behavioural change. These included:

- a rise in the number of teenagers using sunscreen when at the beach or outdoor pool, from 69% in February 2007 to 75% at the same time the following year.
- an increase in adolescents' and young adults' use of protective clothing at lunchtime. In the baseline survey, 23% of teenagers said that they wore protective clothing at lunchtime. This increased to 29% in February 2007, and persisted through until November 2007 (27%). The figure in February 2008 (31%) also represented an increase from the baseline result. Among young adults, 30% of those surveyed in February 2008 reported wearing protective clothing at lunchtime, which represented at least a four percent increase from each of the previous rounds of research.
- a greater proportion of adolescents who said that they used shade in a range of contexts. Teenagers' use of shade was significantly higher in February 2008 at the beach or outdoor pool, the park, at lunchtime, and at an outdoor café or restaurant than it was in each previous round of research. Specifically, use of shade went from 29% in November 2006 to 37% in February 2008 when at the beach or outdoor pool. During this same time period, it rose from 37% to 46% at the park, 45% to 52% at lunchtime, and 34% to 40% in an outdoor café or restaurant.
- a decline in the proportion of teenagers saying that they adopt no sun protection measures at lunchtime between November 2006 (28%) and November 2007 (24%), and between February 2007 (28%) and February 2008 (23%).
- a drop in the proportion of adolescents saying that they adopt no sun protection measures between November 2006 and November 2007, falling from 39% to 33%.

Skin checks

The campaign appears to have encouraged some adults to have their skin checked, given that there was found to be an increase in the proportion of 18-24 year olds who said that they intend to have their skin checked by a doctor within the next 12 months, increasing from 44% prior to the campaign, to 48% in November 2007 and 49% in February 2008.

1.5 Impact of campaign on knowledge

There were found to be significant increases in unprompted awareness of a range of sun protection methods, particularly sunglasses and shade. Among teenagers, unprompted mentions of sunglasses jumped from 24% to 59% between the first and final surveys, and from 39% to 59% among young adults. Unprompted awareness of shade went from 35% to 53% among 18-24 year olds, and from 26% to 53% among 14-17 year olds. There were also notable improvements in the salience of clothing (from 61% to 80% among teenagers, and 77% to 84% among young adults) and hats (76% to 87% among teenagers and 80% to 87% among young adults).

1.6 Impact of campaign on attitudes

There have been some significant improvements in attitudes targeted by the campaign:

- When asked whether, when used properly, sunscreen is an adequate protection on its own, there was found to be more disagreement with this statement among teenagers in February 2008 compared with each previous survey, and disagreement increased after each media burst among 18-24 year olds.
- After the second phase of the campaign, both teenagers and young adults were found to be less likely to perceive treating skin cancer as simple, than they were in each previous round of research.
- Teenagers were more likely to perceive skin cancer as potentially fatal, comparing the baseline results with the February 2007 results. Further improvements were observed after the second phase of the campaign, with agreement reaching 88% in February 2008, which was higher than each of the previous rounds of research.
- In addition, there was evidence that perceived personal susceptibility to skin cancer increased among adolescents. Specifically, the proportion who disagreed that, "Skin cancers only affect older people who have spent years in the sun" was higher in February 2008, compared with both the baseline and February 2007 survey results.
- After the second phase of the campaign, both key audiences were more likely to reject the idea that it is safe to tan gradually. Specifically, 33% of teenagers and 53% of young

adults disagreed that, "It's safe to tan gradually, as long as you don't get burnt" in the baseline survey. These figures increased to 47% and 54% respectively in February 2008.

- The second phase of the campaign also appears, to some extent, to have communicated a message about the risks associated with cumulative exposure. The proportion of young adults who disagreed that, "Small amounts of sun exposure without protection are healthy and won't lead to skin damage" reached 39% in February 2008, which was significantly more than each previous round (including the 34% disagreement in November 2006). There were also higher levels of disagreement among teenagers in February 2008 compared to November 2007.

The February 2008 survey included a new item about Vitamin D. It was found that 9% of teenagers and 11% of young adults disagreed with the statement, "Even using all the recommended sun protection, I would still get plenty of Vitamin D". For this minority, concerns about Vitamin D deficiency may be a barrier to comprehensive sun protection. The results, where significant proportions neither agreed nor disagreed, also indicate that many may be uncertain about the amount of sun exposure they need to get adequate Vitamin D. However, messages about Vitamin D are very difficult to communicate at a National level, given the vast differences in UV levels across the country.

1.7 Campaign awareness and reactions

Unprompted recall of the campaign TVC was sound, being at least 11% among teenagers and 12% among young adults. In addition, around a sixth of participants described an advertisement which appeared to make reference to some surgical procedure. It is likely that at least some of these were descriptions of the National Skin Cancer Awareness Campaign TVC, such that unprompted recall of the TVC could have been as high as around 30%.

Prompted TVC recall was very high. The results followed a typical pattern, with prompted awareness falling when the advertisement had not been on air for some time, and then building on its previous position after the second phase of the campaign. Hence, prompted awareness reached 94% for 14-17 year olds, and 90% for 18-24 year olds.

Reactions to the TVC continued to be favourable. It was seen as believable, attention-grabbing, informative, and it made the audience think about their risk of developing skin cancer, with these measures in February 2008 being as high as, or higher than, previous rounds of research. Furthermore, around three-fifths agreed that the advertisement prompted them to use more forms of sun protection, and a similar proportion agreed that the advertisement prompted them to use sun protection more often.

In both February 2007 and November 2007, recall of the MCG radio advertisement was higher than the World Champs advertisement, ranging from 23%-40% compared to 18%-35%. The

Stapler radio advertisement achieved similar awareness to the MCG advertisement in the February 2008 survey, with prompted recall of 37% among teenagers and 27% among young adults.

Awareness of the print advertisements was highest for the one headed "There's a lot more to treating skin cancer than removing a mole", reaching 75% for teenagers, and 57% for 18-24 year olds in February 2008. The corresponding figures for "Don't let your time in the sun catch up with you" were 48% and 44%.

1.8 Conclusions and recommendations

Overall, the research results indicate that the campaign has been effective. There have been significant improvements in unprompted awareness of the sun protection methods highlighted in the campaign advertising, as well as increases in sun protection behaviours among the target audiences. Furthermore, there have been some significant improvements in many of the attitudes targeted by the campaign.

Given these positive results, consideration should be given to further investment in sun protection messages. There continues to be a need for greater focus on widely-held views about the safety of tanning, to help bring about further behavioural change, particularly with regard to deliberate tanning. Similarly, despite the fact that there has been some improvement in the target audience's recognition of the risks associated with cumulative exposure, these gains could be built upon if risks associated with cumulative exposure received more emphasis in any future campaigns.