Evaluating a school-based drug and alcohol program: The WARP experience

*Fiona McKay¹,², Matthew Dunn¹,²,³

¹ School of Health and Social Development, Deakin University, Victoria, Australia
² Centre for Health through Action on Social Exclusion (CHASE), Deakin University, Victoria, Australia
³ National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre (NDARC), UNSW, Sydney, New South Wales, Australia

Presenter’s email address: fiona.mckay@deakin.edu.au

Issues: The Western Alcohol Reduction Program (WARP) is a secondary school-based program that seeks to address issues related to alcohol use by young people in the Melbourne western metropolitan region. Taking a whole-of-community approach, the program consists of seven programs for a class of twenty students from schools in western Melbourne. The program seeks to highlight negative influences of alcohol on life outcomes, and address the issues of alcohol-related behaviour in assaults, injuries, and preventable consequences of risk taking behaviour.

Approach: The 2013 program is the pilot program; as such, a thorough evaluation of the impact and outcomes is being undertaken. This presentation presents the findings of the evaluation, focusing upon a knowledge, attitudes and behaviour survey administered to the students pre- and post-program.

Key Findings: An initial analysis suggests that students have modified some of their drinking behaviours. When asked if they had had an alcoholic drink in the past month, more students said ‘yes’ pre-program. Post-program, more students agreed that ‘teenagers drink alcohol in order to get attention’, while the number of students who agreed that ‘alcoholic beverages make parties more fun’ decreased post-program, as did the number of students who agreed that ‘people get in better moods after a few drinks of alcohol’. More students disagreed with the statement ‘an ambulance officer would contact the police for an alcohol or drug overdose’, after the program.

Implications & Conclusions: This program has the potential to increase the alcohol and drug related knowledge of high school students, while also having a positive impact on alcohol-related behaviours.

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