Adolescents’ Recall of the Real Cost Campaign and Its Impact on Attitudes and Risk Perceptions about Tobacco Use: A National Study

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Background

- **FDA’s “The Real Cost” campaign aims to educate youth ages 13-17 about the harmful effects of smoking.**
- There is little research on the impact of the campaign on risk perceptions about smoking.1
- This national study examined youth exposure to Real Cost campaign ads, ad reception, and associations with risk perceptions about smoking.

Methods

- **Telephone Survey:** RDD and targeted landline and cell phone, October 2014 to June 2015, verbal parental consent and child assent.
- **Sample:** A national sample (n=1,125; response rate 66%) of US adolescents.

Survey Items

- **Slogan-aided recall:** Have you ever seen or heard any ads on television or radio with the slogan “The Real Cost”?
- **Ad-aided recall:** Have you seen or heard an anti-smoking ad where ...?
- **Teeth:** “a young man pulls his tooth out with pliers”
- **Skin:** “a young woman pulls some skin off her face”
- **Alison:** “a high school girl sits at a lunch table and talks about a bad relationship”
- **Bully:** “a tiny man bullies a teenager”
- **Attitude:** After seeing or hearing this ad, did you feel more positive, more negative or no different about tobacco products?
- **Risk perception:** If you smoked cigarettes regularly for the next 10 years, how likely do you think it is that you would develop serious health problems? (Responses dichotomized as “not at all” vs. “somewhat” or “very”).

Results

- **Recall of Real Cost ads was significantly associated with a greater likelihood of reporting higher perceptions of serious health consequences of cigarette smoking among youth (Table 1).**
- Adolescents were more likely to recall the appearance-related ads (Skin, Tooth) than the addiction-related ads (Bully, Alison) (Figure 1).
- A higher proportion of adolescents who recalled appearance-related ads felt “more negative” about tobacco products than those who recalled addiction-related ads (Figure 2).
- Recall of Real Cost ads was significantly associated with a greater likelihood of reporting higher perceptions of serious health consequences of cigarette smoking among youth (Table 1).

Table 1. Weighted Logistic Regression of Impact of Real Cost Ads on Risk Perception About Cigarette Smoking

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Real Campaign Ad Recall</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>OR [95% CI]</th>
<th>AOR [95% CI]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All (n=1,122)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No recall of any ad</td>
<td>97.1%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recall of at least 1 ad</td>
<td>99.5%</td>
<td>5.9 [1.4-25.5]</td>
<td>6.0 [1.4-25.6]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-smoker (n=1,083)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No recall of any ad</td>
<td>97.1%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recall of at least 1 ad</td>
<td>99.5%</td>
<td>5.7 [1.3-24.8]</td>
<td>5.6 [1.3-24.2]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Model adjusted for sex, age, race, and susceptibility to smoking among non-smokers. Significance levels: *p < .05.

Conclusions

- **The Real Cost campaign has achieved high reach and frequency of exposure among US adolescents.**
- Campaign recall was positively associated with greater risk perceptions about the serious health problems caused by cigarette smoking.
- Messages about appearance may resonate more with adolescents than messages about loss of control due to addiction.
- Findings support the initial success of the campaign.
- Future research should examine the impact of the campaign on behavioural outcomes over time and risk perceptions about health consequences of other tobacco product use.

References


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