

Presentation Abstracts

Theme 1: Innovation in models of care

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Abstract title: *Alcohol and other drugs: Students' knowledge, attitudes and behaviour*

This research studied the impact of the SSMART ASSK health promotion program which delivers innovative alcohol and other drugs (AOD) education to Year 9 students throughout Ballarat and the local region. The program takes the students in day-time to a nightclub where they participate in activities to increase their awareness and knowledge of AOD use and misuse.

The research objective was to evaluate the impact of the program on the knowledge, attitudes and behaviours of young people in relation to AOD in a party situation.

Four surveys were administered to Year 9 students over a period of nine to twelve months in 2014-2015 to ascertain their level of knowledge, attitudes and behaviours around AOD.

Findings revealed a very high information and knowledge base amongst 14-15 year olds around AOD. Data from the surveys yielded some significant results in terms of use of alcohol and drugs, as well as key attitudes around drug use, binge drinking and the effects of AOD use and misuse. Program impact was seen in the final survey with a positive shift in binge drinking knowledge and more responsible drinking behaviour.

It could be concluded that neither a school based curriculum nor the SSMART ASSK program alone is going to have a significant impact on these young people. Consideration needs to be given to offer the program in Year 8 before students initiate the behaviours, and for further research to explore the social norms around AOD including influences from parents, peers, sporting clubs, social media and marketing.

Biography

Catherine works as a Health Promotion Officer at Ballarat Community Health. In her role as co-ordinator of the SSMART ASSK program she has worked closely with Federation University and has been actively involved in the SSMART ASSK research liaising with the schools and the SSMART Network partner organisations.

Dr Robert Townsend is program leader for the Masters of Social Work and a senior researcher with the Faculty of Education and Arts at Federation University.