Smoking and Breast Cancer: Girls’ and Boys’ Reactions to Tailored, Internet Delivered Messages

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Smoking and breast cancer: Girls’ and boys’ reactions to tailored, internet delivered messages

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Background

- Active smoking and exposure to secondhand smoke (SHS) are causally linked to premenopausal breast cancer (BC).
- To date, there have been few efforts to raise awareness of active smoking and SHS as risk factors for BC.

Purpose

- To develop and evaluate messages for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal adolescent girls and boys to raise awareness about tobacco exposure as a risk factor for BC.

Methods

Message Development

- Preliminary messages were designed based on our previous research (Bottruff et al., 2010; Haines et al., 2010), the literature, and gendered norms among youth.
  - The messages were presented for feedback on design and appropriateness to 43 youth (18 were female, 20 were of Aboriginal descent) in 8 focus groups.
  - The findings informed the development of tailored messages.

Message Evaluation

- Nested randomized trial within a web-based cohort study of 1,273 youth from 74 secondary schools in British Columbia (BC Adolescent Substance Use Survey).
  - Participants within each school were randomized to either a control or intervention group [n=1,498].
  - The intervention group received a message tailored according to each participant’s gender and Aboriginal status about the risk for BC associated with tobacco.
  - The control group received a standard message about the risk of cancer associated with smoking.

Results

Table 1. When you are exposed to SHS, do you consistently do things to reduce your exposure to the smoke? (n=741)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Message</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>(n=32)</td>
<td>(n=32)</td>
<td>(n=49)</td>
<td>(n=49)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>intervention</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aboriginal</td>
<td>15 (50)</td>
<td>17 (53)</td>
<td>34 (69)</td>
<td>17 (62)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Aboriginal</td>
<td>167 (46)</td>
<td>145 (44)</td>
<td>219 (68)</td>
<td>172 (69)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- 23% of Aboriginal girls were more likely to reduce SHS exposure in the future.
- Compared to the control group, non-Aboriginal boys in the intervention group were more likely to indicate that they planned to reduce their SHS exposure.
- Exposure to the intervention was associated with an increase in requests to receive additional web-based information regarding the link between tobacco exposure and BC in both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal girls, but not in boys.

Conclusions

- Few teens are aware of the increased risk of breast cancer associated with tobacco smoke exposure.
- Brief gender and Aboriginal-specific messages have the potential to stimulate information seeking about tobacco exposure and breast cancer risk.

Acknowledgements

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For more information: www.ubc.ca/okanagan/start