

HEAR YE! HEAR YE!

GETTING OUT THE GOOD NEWS ON HEP C CURE

BACKGROUND

Groundbreaking new hepatitis C treatments, with a high cure rate and minimal side-effects, became widely available in Australia on March 1, 2016. In response, the NSW Ministry of Health developed a Viral Hepatitis Communications Strategy. Launched in July 2016, on World Hepatitis Day, the campaign had the message “HEP C - LIVE HEP FREE: Are you living with hep C? New effective treatments are available.”

Hepatitis NSW was tasked with testing and refining the messaging/design/imagery for the community, and producing the next phase of the strategy. A state-wide awareness campaign, scheduled to run during Hepatitis Awareness Week 2017 utilising a variety of media platforms and resources was developed following extensive community consultations.

RESULTS

A total of 300 people were surveyed for the evaluation. Respondents stated the advertisements communicated effectively, and over half correctly identified the main message. Overall recall of advertisements was at 30%, with a higher recall rate among 30-49 year olds and respondents who had previously had a hep C test.

The campaign was evaluated as “likely to have a good impact on intentions”; 80% of respondents believed the adverts would encourage people at risk to seek out further health information. While adverts were considered ‘direct’ and ‘friendly’ they were also described as ‘busy’, with the main feedback being that there should have been a stronger and clearer emphasis on how easy hep C cure had become.



METHOD

The campaign was rolled out over a six week period starting in early June 2017. Advertising platforms for the public awareness component in Sydney included train station billboards (see image above), buses and pharmacies and, in regional NSW, used shopping centres and local newspapers. A targeted Facebook campaign was also utilised to reach people over 18 years old, across NSW. To assist people to take action, the advertising prominently displayed the campaign website - hepC.org.au - and Hepatitis NSW infoline number - 1800 803 990.

Over the course of the campaign, almost 3,500,000 people saw an advert at least once, and Facebook posts were seen more than one million times.

For communities at greater risk of hep C, various resources were produced. A mini-comic and fit-pack stickers for people who inject drugs, a booklet with short personal stories for Aboriginal people, and a mini-leaflet for people in prison. In total, over 32,000 resources were distributed to NSPs, Aboriginal Medical Services, prisons and other organisations.

CONCLUSION

This was a “good news” health campaign offering a positive outcome. To emphasise this, the decision was made to simplify the messaging for the 2018 phase of the campaign to “HEP C - CURE IS EASY”.

It is hoped that this - along with variations in advertising platforms to better reach rural areas and people who inject drugs - will result in an even greater number of people seeking information and cure.

