

SEXUAL HEALTH UPDATE

20 OCTOBER 2004

Issue Two

Kia ora tatou katoa, Talofa lava, Malo e lelei, Kia orana, Fakaalofa lahi atu, Ni sa bula, Taloha ni, and greetings. We're very excited with the progress of the new national sexual health campaign, and the concept that has been chosen for the campaign. Pretesting highlighted one concept in particular as having the most impact with young people. This issue of *Sexual Health Update* will look at the process undertaken to select this concept, and why young people like it so much.

The sexual health campaign will include messages and resources that we hope regional and local providers can use in their work. In this issue we list some upcoming events at which campaign messages will be promoted, and look at ways that the campaign team and sexual health providers can work together to make the most of the opportunities provided by these events.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank the sexual health sector for its ongoing input into, and support of, the campaign.

Kia ora and kind regards

Sally Hughes
Project Manager, Sexual Health Campaign
Ministry of Health

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Campaign facts at a glance

- The sexual health campaign aims to encourage sexually active young people to use a condom to protect themselves from sexually transmitted infections.
- The campaign's television commercials will go to air in the week beginning 22 November 2004. Radio and print advertising will begin soon after.
- The campaign will run until the end of February 2005.
- Working closely with the sexual health sector is a priority for the campaign team. It is important that campaign messages enhance existing work, rather than put an additional workload on people who are already very busy.
- The campaign is being developed with ongoing support and advice from a working group made up of key organisations with an interest in sexual health. Working group members include representatives from the Family Planning Association, the NZ AIDS Foundation, Te Puawai Tapu, the NZ Prostitutes Collective, sexual health physicians, district health boards and the Ministry of Health.
- It will use a variety of media, including TV, cinema, radio, outdoor advertising, magazines, web advertising and print resources.
- More detailed information on STIs and condom use will be available from the campaign website. Articles in youth magazines will encourage the use of condoms by sexually active young people, and events will also be used to further promote the message and to distribute more detailed information.

It has been great seeing the sexual health sector come together to provide input into the development of the campaign as this provides an invaluable opportunity to extend the reach of the message, particularly to rangatahi.

Charrissa Makowharemahihi, Analyst, Māori Health Directorate

Finding our concept

Finding the right concept is key for any campaign. The concept has to convey the campaign messages in a way that is acceptable to different cultures, easily understood, and appealing and appropriate for the age group. Youth campaigns are particularly challenging as the message needs to be delivered in a way that gets buy-in from young people, and that isn't perceived by them as being 'try-hard', or 'uncool', or as yet another attempt by adults to tell them what to do.

Once the concept is selected, it forms the basis of most of the campaign media - television and radio commercials, posters, print advertising, outdoor advertising, website and so on.

Before any concepts were developed, we spent time talking to young people about sexual health, and what type of messages would be most effective in delivering the 'use a condom' message to them.

Based on the information gathered, a team of creative designers, working in consultation with groups of teenagers, developed around 30 TV commercial concepts. These were then whittled down to the five concepts that promised to be the most effective in getting the message across, based on the information received from young people. These concepts were shown to nine groups of sexually active young people. The groups included Pakeha, Māori, and Pacific youth. There was one group of gay teenagers. Focus groups were held in Kaikohe, Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch and Ashburton. Concept testing was carried out by research company TNS.

The aim of the concept testing was to find the commercial that would most effectively communicate the importance of using a condom every time you have sex, with the widest group of young people.

The five concepts tested had a variety of styles and delivery: some used animation and others real people; some used humour and others were serious; some used empathy and others used factual information and statistics about STIs. A number included music, and all portrayed situations with which young people would be familiar. Two were set at parties, one was a conversation between two young people, and the other two used quite abstract concepts.

Feedback from the test groups highlighted a number of issues:

- an upbeat, positive and non-judgmental tone was appreciated by participants
- youth like to feel empowered and in charge of making their own decisions - they do not want to be told what to do
- for a television commercial to have cut-through it must portray a realistic situation, and one in which sex taking place later is a realistic possibility
- new and interesting information was appreciated.

There was one concept that clearly had the most 'cut through' - that was liked by young people, grabbed their attention and delivered the message effectively. This concept had strong appeal to all groups, but in particular to Māori and Pacific males and females and Pakeha males.

The young people consulted felt that the message portrayed was credible and relevant for their age group. It clearly gave the message 'if you are having sex, use a condom'.

Where to from here?

The concept chosen by young people is now in production. It features a mixture of animation and 'real people', so drawings are being developed, and characters cast. The commercial will be filmed in October, and will go to air in the week beginning 22 November.

Other learnings from the concept testing will be incorporated into the development of magazine and radio advertising.

Radio commercials are being developed as part of the campaign and will run from late November to the end of February 2005. These commercials are available for use by the sexual health sector if you are able to purchase airtime on your local stations. For further information contact Jodi Hogan at Graham Strategic on 04 384 1047.

Campaign message timely in fight against HIV/AIDS

Rachael Le Mesurier, Executive Director of the New Zealand AIDS Foundation, says the upcoming sexual health campaign, with its focus on condom use, is timely, as HIV rates continue to increase in all risk groups - heterosexual, men-who-have-sex-with-men (MSM) and injecting drug users.

"Using a condom protects against HIV transmission, as well as sexually transmitted infections (STI) such as chlamydia and gonorrhoea, which is vital, given that having an existing STI can make it some ten times easier to contract HIV."

Ms Le Mesurier says the increase in HIV among New Zealand MSM is especially concerning. She says 2003 recorded one of the highest numbers of new HIV infections among New Zealand MSM since the epidemic began. This trend has continued into 2004, with 34 MSM being diagnosed with HIV in the first six months, compared with 33 in the same period last year.

"New figures for the second quarter of 2004 - April to June - also indicate that much of the new HIV diagnoses are a result of recent unsafe sexual activity. This suggests that commitment to consistent condom use among MSM is starting to slide. Any message that encourages sexually active people, whatever their sexuality, to put condoms back into their sex lives will help reduce the spread of HIV in New Zealand."

The Ministry's sexual health campaign encourages sexually active teens to use a condom - highlighting a message that has been promoted by the AIDS Foundation for years.

Rachael Le Mesurier says that the answer to ending the HIV epidemic among all New Zealanders remains what it has been for the 20 or so years of the epidemic - the consistent use of condoms.

"The new campaign will highlight this message to young people throughout the country."

What's coming up?

National hui

Information on the campaign and its key messages will be presented at the **1st National Māori Sexual and Reproductive Health Conference** to be held at Wainuiomata on 1 November. The hui will provide a great platform to ensure everyone is kept up to date with the development of the campaign and to gain feedback. The inaugural hui will focus on building Māori sexual and reproductive health services, giving participants 'hands on' training, and developing a national strategic plan.

Sally Hughes will present details of the campaign at the Family Planning Association-hosted **Sex Matters** conference, to be held in Wellington from 29 to 31 October. The conference will examine critical sexual and reproductive health issues nationally and internationally, reviewing what has worked, and addressing public and personal health issues. The increasing rates of sexually transmitted infections, and in particular chlamydia, will be under the spotlight.

Events

By having a presence at youth events this summer, we can communicate key campaign messages. For example, we have been exploring events likely to be attended by rangatahi Māori such as next year's national Kapa Haka competition in Palmerston North. This event has a youth focus, and may be an ideal opportunity to promote the safer sex message.

We aim to support each of the events listed below with a range of campaign resources and merchandise. Please contact Trevor Shailer at Graham Strategic (04 384 1907 or 021 352 556, email Trevor@grahamstrategic.co.nz) if you would like to discuss what is available, or if you are involved in other events over the summer that you would like added to the campaign events schedule.

As you will note, we are looking for people to assist with the Edgefest events, to be held in four main centres in March 2005. The Edgefest is a music concert with a difference, run by radio station The Edge. It has a large interactive main stage which will ensure the expected 25,000 plus youth audience hear and see their favorite kiwi artists along with international bands. If you are able to help us promote the campaign messages at these events, please contact Trevor.

Events diary

Event	Date	Contact
Sex in the Park	27 November (Christchurch)	Maria Smolar Community Public Health, Christchurch
Big Day Out	21 January 2005 (Auckland)	Amanda Shultz Auckland DHB
University orientation	February 2005 (national)	Jan Keir-Smith Family Planning Association
Big Gay Out	February 2005 (Auckland)	to be confirmed
National Kapa Haka Festival	24 to 28 February 2005	to be confirmed
Edgefest	12 March 2005 (Auckland) 13 March 2005 (Hamilton) 18 March 2005 (Wellington) 19 March 2005 (Christchurch)	any volunteers!

How the campaign can work for sexual health providers

The sexual health campaign will include messages and resources that we hope regional and local providers can use in their work. The campaign team has already started working with several providers who are co-ordinating or attending events during the campaign period. For example we have been discussing how campaign messages can be incorporated into Christchurch's *Sex in the Park* event, which is being co-ordinated by Community Public Health's Maria Smolar. We're talking with Maria about how to position the key messages, and which signage and promotional ideas will work best (watch this space). If you have an event or promotion that you are planning and are keen to link into the campaign branding, resources and merchandise, please let us know.

Highlighting our rising STI rates

The sexual health sector does a great job of keeping sexual health issues, such as our rising STI rates, in the minds of the public. The media often carries stories generated by the sector about chlamydia figures, gonorrhoea and HIV/AIDS rates, and the benefits of using condoms.

An aim of the new sexual health campaign is to work with the sexual health sector to continue and increase this awareness. The more awareness there is of New Zealand's high STI rates, the more likely adults are to accept and support the new campaign.

We have a series of media releases planned that highlight issues around STIs and STI rates. The first statement *Sexually active teens urged to use condoms* was released on 9 September. Spokesperson was sexual health physician Nicky Perkins, who warned that teenagers can pay a high price for risky sexual health practices. This and subsequent releases can be found on the Ministry of Health's website; www.moh.govt.nz.

In October we are going to be working with sexual health providers to target local media. The aim is to get articles about rising STI rates, with a regional focus, in a number of local and provincial newspapers.

Information about high STI rates was sent to the Shortland Street scriptwriters several months ago. It was gratifying to see a strong message about chlamydia and the need to use condoms in a recent episode. We don't know if this was due to the information we supplied, but we're going to claim credit anyway!

We have also supplied information to documentary makers, television news programmes, and magazines. If you are approached by your local media for story ideas, please keep us in mind. We'd be more than happy to provide key facts on STI rates and generic information about the upcoming campaign. For more information, contact Liz Price at liz.price@xtra.co.nz, or phone 04 577 2997.

In the past month we have explored some exciting opportunities with Māori media (Māori television, magazines etc) to extend the reach of the message to rangatahi. The response from Māori media has been very supportive of the kaupapa and we hope to be able to finalise details shortly. Positioning the campaign message and ensuring it is delivered in an appropriate way should see a continued raising of awareness of the issue.

Pacific resources

The Pacific Communications team has completed an audit of current Pacific resources in the sexual health arena. After careful consultation with Pacific sexual health providers and workers, the team has decided to develop a resource for parents that we hope will be translated into four Pacific languages. This will complement the youth radio campaign that will run on Niu FM's youth show. We will keep you updated on this project.

Sexual Health Update can be accessed on the Ministry of Health website
www.moh.govt.nz/publications/newsletters
