



What is best practice for mass media campaigns addressing physical activity, nutrition and healthy weight in Australia?

Background

- Most of the burden of disease in Australia is from chronic disease (non-communicable diseases, NCDs). The risk factors contributing the most burden in 2011 were tobacco use (9.0%), high body mass (5.5%), alcohol use (5.1%), physical inactivity (5.0%) and high blood pressure (4.9%).¹
- While the smoking rate in Australia has fallen to among the lowest levels in the world, the number of Australian who are obese or overweight has increased (to 63% in 2011–12), and most Australians are failing to eat the recommended intake of fruit and vegetables or to do the recommended amount of physical activity.²
- The use of mass media campaigns to address risk factors for chronic disease prevention has had a chequered history in the past three decades in Australia. Initial successes were noted with mass media anti-tobacco campaigns, starting with the first Quit Campaign in NSW in 1983.^{3–5}
- Further development of mass media campaigns and associated activities in Australia led to major reductions in smoking rates, including in adolescent smoking.^{6–10}
- The rise of obesity in the 1990s, and global increase in non-communicable diseases [NCDs, especially diabetes and cardiovascular disease] led to substantial interest in using mass media campaigns in new areas, through the communication of health messages about healthy diet, physical activity and obesity prevention.^{11,12}
- Mass media campaigns in these domains have occurred in many countries, but detailed informative evidence on their implementation and effects is reported infrequently. This patchwork of evidence on campaigns for physical activity, diet and obesity prevention has led to the present review.

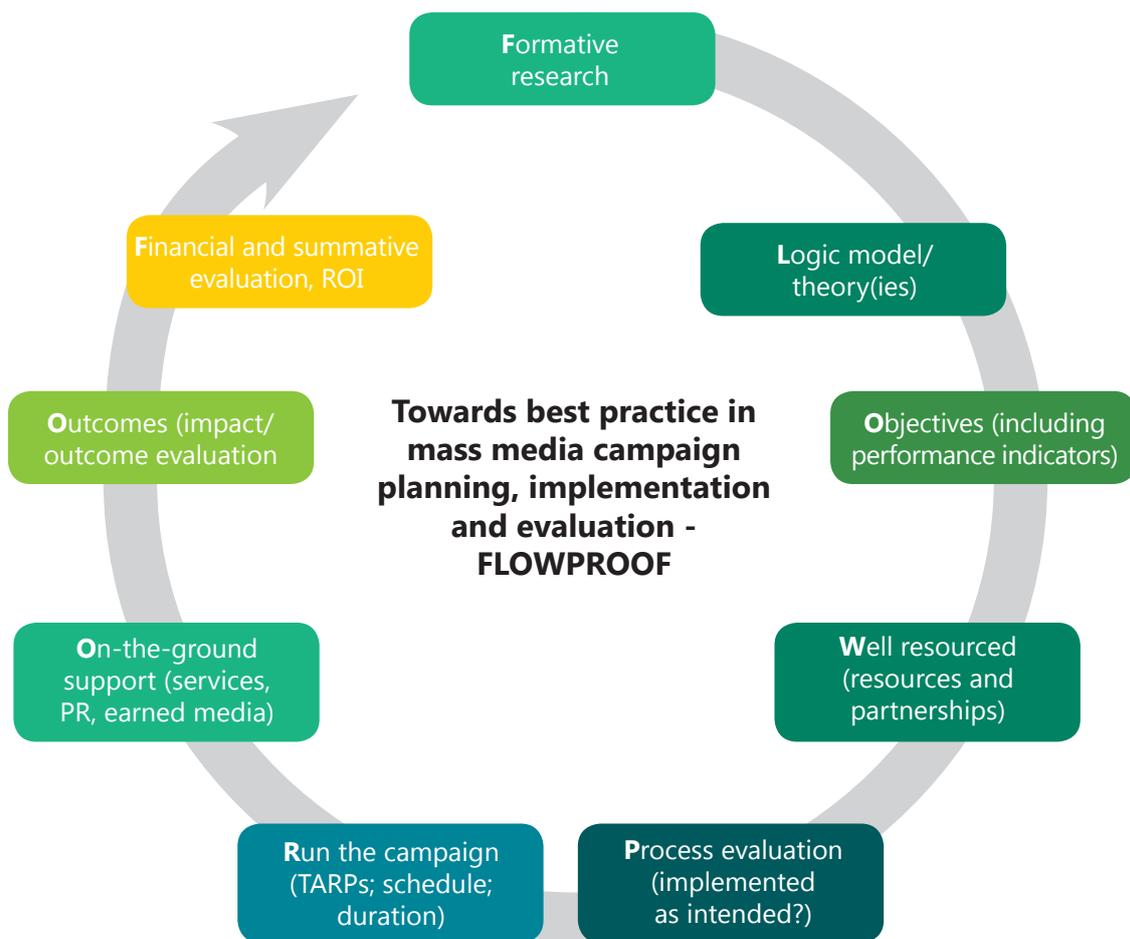
Review purpose

- To identify best practice approaches in mass media campaigns and encourage these practices in preventing chronic diseases
- To codify the lessons and successes from mass media campaigns in Australia
- To develop recommendations that may inform a more coordinated approach to the design, implementation and evaluation of mass media campaigns addressing physical activity, nutrition and obesity in Australia.

Key findings

- The FLOWPROOF protocol comprising nine key components of campaign implementation and evaluation (Figure 1) was developed by the authors based on a synthesis from selected scientific literature on campaign evaluation and effectiveness,^{13,14} and good practice characteristics of interventions for healthy eating and physical activity in Australia.¹⁵ For details of the FLOWPROOF protocol refer to the full report.¹⁶
- The review considered 17 mass media campaigns conducted in Australia from 1996 to 2015, including three national and 12 statewide campaigns. The selected campaigns were reviewed using the FLOWPROOF protocol. Only those evaluation components that could be extracted for comparison across campaigns were included.
- Most campaigns primarily used paid mass media and did not focus on all of the potential marketing elements of an integrated social marketing campaign, least of all on the components of legislation, regulation and policy development.
- In light of the review, nine key recommendations for mass media campaigns in Australia are put forward.

Figure 1



FLOWPROOF – A protocol towards best practice in mass media campaign planning, implementation and evaluation
Source: Grunseit, Bellew, Goldbaum, Gale, Bauman (2016)

Key recommendations for mass media campaigns in Australia

1. Campaigns should be part of an integrated, system-wide approach to chronic disease prevention
2. Campaigns and main messages should be consistent across Australia
3. Underpinning theory/logic models need to be made explicit and applied
4. Clear, measurable campaign goals and objectives should be specified
5. Linkages to broader strategies (beyond communication) should be further developed
6. Campaign duration and investment should reach a defined impact threshold
7. A campaign planning and evaluation protocol (e.g. FLOWPROOF) could contribute to better practice
8. Campaign evaluations should be made publically available
9. Sustained campaign efforts over several years are required to achieve population impact.

¹ For more specific details refer to the full report: Grunseit A, Bellew B, Goldbaum, E, Gale J, Bauman A. Mass media campaigns addressing physical activity, nutrition and obesity in Australia: An updated narrative review. Sydney; The Australian Prevention Partnership Centre. 2016.

Research gaps

The authors identified the need for research to:

1. Explore optimal per capita investment and impact thresholds for mass media campaigns in Australia addressing physical activity, nutrition and healthy weight
2. Elucidate the optimal role of social media and digital strategies within mass media and social marketing campaigns
3. Audit whether these recommendations are addressed in future mass media campaigns in Australia
4. Explore the perceived usefulness and adoption of the FLOWPROOF protocol among mass media planners, practitioners, decision-makers and researchers.

Summary of review method

- A literature search was conducted using PubMed, Medline, Web of Science, PsychInfo and Scopus. The purpose of the literature search was to identify Australian PANO MMCs and publications which described their conduct and evaluation, rather than just to identify articles to review.
- Fifty-five campaigns were identified through the process described above. The reference lists of articles were examined to find further campaigns that may not have peer-reviewed publications associated with them (i.e. only grey literature reports). Article titles, abstracts and/or campaign descriptions were examined by three researchers to determine inclusion. A PANO MMC was included if: (a) it took place in Australia, 1996 to 2015; (b) the primary target group was adults; (c) it used paid mass media advertising; (d) it was implemented at a population level; and (e) it focused on physical activity, nutrition or obesity for the purpose of NCD prevention.
- Seventeen campaigns met the inclusion criteria. Articles describing the campaigns and their evaluation were extracted from the peer-review literature and grey literature (the latter through searching government and/or campaign websites and by contacting authors directly).

The Australian Prevention Partnership Centre

The Prevention Centre is finding out how we can build an effective, efficient and equitable system for the prevention of lifestyle-related chronic disease.

This evidence brief has been prepared by Adjunct Professor Bill Bellew, on behalf of the authors of the full report:

Grunseit A, Bellew B, Goldbaum, E, Gale J, Bauman A. Mass media campaigns addressing physical activity, nutrition and obesity in Australia: An updated narrative review. Sydney; The Australian Prevention Partnership Centre. 2016.

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