MONITORING UNHEALTHY MARKETING TO YOUNG PEOPLE ON SOCIAL MEDIA

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Why VicHealth commissioned the work

Health promotion - reducing impact of harmful industries. Digital marketing is making it easier for these industries to promote themselves - especially to children and young people

Focused on alcohol, gambling and unhealthy food

Worked with 204 young people - captured over 5,000 screenshots of marketing

WHY IS DIGITAL DIFFICULT

Targeted marketing that researchers don't see as it's based on individual use

Grown significant market shares. Facebook/Instagram & Google/YouTube TikTok on rise

Uniquely unavailable to public scrutiny

Deep relationship with unhealthy marketers

RESEARCH STRUCTURE

good age spectrum gender split metro/regional split

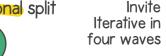Covert and overt strategies - differences in industries and/or platforms

Perceptions of young people - awareness of strategies; things perceived as problematic

Impacts of the activity on young people - influencing opinions/attitudes as well as emotions and/or behaviours

Impacts of involvement on participants

1 Recruit Via social media

2 Invite Iterative in four waves

3 Survey 1 Onboarding, training & initial survey

4 Data collection One week sharing screenshots and answering questions via SMS **MessageMedia**

5 Survey 2 Reflecting, re-testing some questions Sent gift cards $100

6 Focus Group Discussion Forums Optional - hear results, contribute to analysis, reflect and discuss with others **FocusGroupIT**

SMS helped a LOT - we meet them where they were already -

3,009

2,101

Researchers worked with individual groups to create rapport

Use of SMS chat increased as they got into data gathering

Approx. 85% retention once they were onboarded

Video onboarding to help them understand what we wanted and what they were seeing

Helped that they got interested and the payment happened at the end

We feel, if you're asking them to contribute you should value it by paying

COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

CITIZEN SCIENCE IN PREVENTION

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What actions are possible to protect young people in digital space?

Future possibilities around AI & panels to review more content

Industry self-regulation needs to change

Review ethics of targeted advertising - harmful method, especially for addicted people

More responsive and reflective regulatory measures

Did you address inclusiveness and ethnic/racial disparity?

Asked diversity questions in recruitment survey but did not recruit for it

Were you satisfied with data and was anything surprising?

Data is so rich and plentiful - quality is extraordinary

Some surprising new methods of advertising - particularly covert ones not visible to us before

Representative group of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders

What kind of ethics issues came up?

Screenshots that include reference to friends - process to anonymise

Harm vs Value Big ask in time but also how it might influence their algorithms and expose them more

HOW WE'LL USE IT

Help develop our understanding of how harmful industries work in this space

Influence policy around health protections - complaints based processes not effective for targeted marketing

More work raising awareness in general public about how they do it and the impact

Validated use of Citizen Science for this sort of research

10 Principles of Citizen Science from Australian Citizen Science Association

Sensemaking together helped them feel more included

Project not possible without citizen scientists doing data collection

REFLECTION ON PRINCIPLES
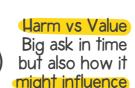
On reflection, achieved greater compliance than previous projects

Still working out ethics - particularly in sharing

Still working on how to brief the results back