

BACKGROUND

Burn injuries represent a leading cause of unintentional injury, mortality and morbidity and have been described as being one of the most devastating of injuries among people of all age groups¹.

Many burn injuries lead to prolonged and expensive hospital stays² requiring specialised staff and medical technologies that are expensive and not always readily available¹.

A recent Australian study evaluated financial costs of burns, outlining the great discrepancy between the high patient costs versus money spent on prevention and education³. Approximately 300 times more funding is spent on patient care than is spent on burn prevention each year.

INTRODUCTION

Statistics from the Australia and New Zealand Bi National Burn Registry (BiNBR) show that around 2/3 of all flame-related burn injuries result from the misuse of an accelerant, such as petrol, to ignite or enhance a fire. Over a 3 year period more than 1600 people were admitted to specialist burn centres in Australia and New Zealand after sustaining burns from an accelerant-fuelled fire. Over 80% were males, with the high risk age group being between 20 and 29 years old. Drugs or alcohol were involved in approximately one third of all cases.

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Never Mix Fire + Petrol



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AIM

Males aged 20-40 years are over represented in accelerant related flame burn injury admitted to burn centres across Australia and New Zealand. Our aim was to highlight the dangers of mixing fire and accelerants; reducing burns caused by this mechanism.



METHOD

A community service announcement (CSA) was developed to highlight common things which don't mix. A burns survivor was engaged to highlight the possible implications of mixing fire and petrol.

The draft CSA was shown to a focus group to ensure the message was clear and changes were made according to feedback. Air time was purchased on the Nine Network programs throughout Australia during times when young males were expected to be viewing.

DISCUSSION

The number of viewing times was restricted due to expense of air time. It is very difficult to evaluate the impact on the target audience, however in the future we hope to see a reduction in these types of injuries reflected in the BiNBR.

Further campaigns focusing on significant burn mechanisms are being developed by the ANZBA Prevention Sub-Committee.

CONCLUSION

Burn injuries are significant in our young male population as a result of accelerant misuse. The burn community needs to work strategically with key stakeholders to increase knowledge and awareness of accelerant risk around fires and burn first aid.

Further funding is required to purchase airtime to enhance the amount the CSA is viewed.



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