

A co-design project to raise awareness of the harms of shisha smoking among young people

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Introduction and Aims: Shisha is becoming increasingly popular globally,¹ but is associated with an increased risk of lung and oral cancer,² and a higher risk of cigarette smoking initiation among young people.³ This research aims to develop and evaluate a social marketing campaign that raises awareness of the harms of shisha smoking among young people of Arabic background.

Design and Methods: The project conducted workshops with community champions, young people and health professionals to identify appropriate strategies and messages. The health message that resonated most was "45min=100 cigarettes". The project was evaluated through an SMS community panel who were sent survey questions before and after the campaign about their awareness of harms, and intention to reduce or cease smoking shisha.

Results: Numerous campaign resources were developed, including a campaign video which had over 350,000 views, website, social media platforms, fact sheets and community worker sessions. The SMS panel recruited 133 people, and showed that a greater proportion had seen or heard something about the harms of shisha smoking after the campaign (67.5% vs 45%, $p=0.003$), but there was no significant difference in the proportion who intended to reduce or cease shisha smoking.

Discussions and Conclusions: This is one of few published interventions aimed at preventing shisha smoking, particularly focused on young people.^{4,5} Through a co-design process, the project was able to raise awareness of messages about the harms of shisha smoking.

Implications for Practice or Policy: This research has demonstrated that a co-design, social marketing approach can be an effective strategy, and should be sustained. Continued community engagement and integration with other interventions are likely required to produce changes in behaviour.

Implications for Translational Research: Research into whether this type of intervention is effective in other communities is important as shisha smoking is now being practiced by other cultural groups.

References:

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