

HEALTH PROMOTION PROGRAMME OF ULSS 22 FOR PREVENTION OF ALCOHOLISM

1. Organisations involved

SPISAL (Servizio Prevenzione Igiene Sicurezza Ambienti di Lavoro) Azienda of ULSS 22 at Bussolengo (The Department for Prevention and Health in Working Environments of the ULSS 22)

2. Description of the case

2.1. Introduction

Over the last few years in Italy, although the average consumption of alcohol has decreased considerably, the percentage of young people with unhealthy drinking habits has increased. In the Veneto Region, figures show that 51.5% of young people who are between the ages of 14-19 consume alcohol on a regular basis, of whom 41% admit getting drunk at least once or twice a month.(1) Between November 2005 and October 2007, out of 743 individuals who went to the first aid departments in Veneto, 37% had an alcoholaemia level above 1.5 g/l, greater than the legal limit of 0.5 g/l, and these were especially involving those in the younger age groups.(2) In addition, this Region is ranked second in the country for the occurrence of road fatalities due to drunk driving, which represents 17% of all car accidents in Italy.(1) Just over one-third (35%) of the drink drivers in the Veneto Region are aged between 18 and 30, and in Italy, in comparison with other countries in Europe, alcohol related car accidents are the leading cause of death for young people aged between 15 and 29.(1) Overall, the use of excessive alcohol among young people in Italy leads to impaired driving.(3)

Research shows that alcohol abuse amongst young people causes not only negative effects on health, but also serious social problems and problems concerning work and the family.(4,5,) This is worrying because as individuals get older, they tend to drink more.(6) Further, unacceptable consumption of alcoholic drinks represents one of the main factors of risk for the health and safety of workers. This risk is supported by data showing that the use of alcohol is linked to 10-30% of accidents at the workplace.(6)

In order to generate data to assist in the planning and implementation of a promotion programme aimed at improving the health of workers, in 2005, the Spisal (Prevention and Protection Services) of the local health authority (ULSS 22) of Bussolengo conducted a study, approved by the Ethics Committee. This study looked at the lifestyles of workers (including young people) in manufacturing companies located in the area under the jurisdiction of the ULSS. In addition, the researchers used a second survey to evaluate the associated risk of those workers who consumed alcohol during their lunch time and their likelihood of being involved in an accident on the road or at their place of work.

For the first survey 18 occupational physicians interviewed 675 workers (with an average age of 38, the youngest person was 18 and the oldest 67) in 44 manufacturing companies. The questions focused on their alcohol consumption habits at work and their opinions on the effects of alcohol.

In the second survey, 138 workers (average age around 40, the youngest person was 18 and the oldest 80) were interviewed on leaving 6 restaurants at lunchtime. They were offered also a voluntary breathalyser test to check their blood alcohol concentration level.

A brief overview of the results of these two surveys showed that:

- Less alcohol is drunk at meals consumed in company canteens than at home or in restaurants;
- In the restaurants, around ¼ of workers were over the limit of 0.5 g/l at the end of the meal, and of those 3 out of 4 had drunk a bitter liqueur, a coffee with liqueur or an alcoholic shot;

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- The percentage of drinkers interviewed outside the restaurant involved: 47% of those aged < 30, 65% of those 30-40 years and 40-50 years, 68% of those 50-65 years, and 83% of those > 65 years;
- Drivers were the ones who drank the highest quantity of alcohol, followed by manual workers;
- Alcohol consumption during working hours is widespread.

Following the survey and the results, it was decided to conduct a campaign in support of safe behaviour when driving and at the workplace (especially for young people), with specific initiatives in factories and restaurants in the territory of ULSS. The staff of the Prevention Department of the ULSS 22 coordinated this campaign.

2.2. Aims

The project was aimed at making people aware of safe behaviour when driving and at work, to prevent a dependency on alcohol, and more generally to promote an acceptable level of consumption of alcoholic drinks (especially amongst young people).

2.3. What was done, and how?

At the start of the campaign the promoters:

- Trained the personnel in the Departments of Prevention, in selective prevention of alcohol abuse;
- Conducted a study of alcohol-related incidents in first aid at hospitals in the Veneto area;
- Developed staff's experience with estimated efficiency assessment - EBP¹.

Social marketing

Social marketing was used to promote the campaign intensively and involved a variety of methods as outlined:

- Meetings with associations of businesses and consumers;
- Meetings with associations of contractors and workers;
- Press conference and notices;
- Interviews on radio and television;
- Articles in local daily newspapers;
- Articles on "Health news objectives" and "PREVENTION";
- Involvement of the Unions in the ULSS Communes;
- Inclusion of restaurants involved in the ULSS area.

Actions

In conjunction with the social marketing, the promoters used specific actions to obtain focused results. These involved:

- Training operators in the department;

¹ EBP: Evidence Based Prevention

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- Organising sessions to train and further instruct companies on the prevention of alcohol abuse for promotion of health policies;
- The insertion of an invitation by UGAV² in the association's journal (390 subscribers) to join the campaign;
- The Spisal operators promoting the "Campaign" in production companies;
- The SIAN³ operators encouraging restaurant owners to maintain their involvement in the "Campaign" and thereby abolish the habit of offering a bitter liqueur at the end of the meal, as well as to promote responsible behaviour of designated drivers, by having them refrain from having any alcoholic drinks with their meals. See Figure 1.

Figure 1: Campaign in favour of safe behaviour when driving and at work (Campagna a favore di comportamenti sicuri alla guida e al lavoro)

CAMPAGNA A FAVORE DI

Non lasciamoci con l'amaro in bocca

L'amaro offerto al momento di pagare il conto tante volte è quello che ci fa superare il limite alcolemico consentito dalla legge per guidare. È un gesto di cortesia del ristoratore che ci può compromettere seriamente. Riflettere su questo semplice gesto e rifiutare può salvarci la vita e preservare la patente.

Diamo un passaggio alla sicurezza

Chi beve non guida! Questa regola deve entrare nel nostro stile di vita. Si deve inoltre avere il coraggio di non salire sull'auto di chi ha bevuto. Un gesto che ci permette di avere la certezza di tornare a casa sani e salvi.

Non facciamo lavorare l'alcol

L'alcol presente in birra, vino, amari e super alcolici è una sostanza che altera le nostre prestazioni. Significa quindi perdere il controllo della macchina o impianto che stiamo utilizzando rischiando di fare seri danni. Al lavoro non si deve bere alcol e non si deve arrivare alterati dall'alcol. Difficile? Sicuramente responsabile.

COMPORTAMENTI SICURI ALLA GUIDA E AL LAVORO

Per saperne di più: promozionesalute@ulss22.ven.it

Adescono alla campagna:

CNA, CONFINDUSTRIA, CONFESERCENTI Verona, upa, CASARTIGIANI, C/STI, CGIL, UGAV, SIAN, Hermete, ULSS 22 Regione Veneto

iniziativa realizzata con il contributo della Regione del Veneto - Assessorato alle Politiche sociali, Volontariato e Non Profit.

² UGAV: Unione Gardesana Albergatori Veronesi (Association of Hotels in Verona)

³ SIAN: Servizio Igiene degli Alimenti e della Nutrizione (Service for Hygiene of Food and Nutrition)

2.4. What was achieved?

In restaurants:

- Out of the 50 restaurant owners approached, 46 joined the campaign to end the habit of offering a bitter liqueur at the end of the meal (slogan and logo "Non lasciamoci con l'amaro in bocca" - "Don't leave a bitter taste in your mouth"), thus highlighting the negative effects of having unnecessary alcohol at the end of a meal;
- The promoters targeted designated drivers during the normal restaurant service to promote sensible behaviour with (the slogan and logo "Diamo un passaggio alla sicurezza" - "Let's give safety a hand").

In companies:

Specific actions were carried out to endorse the adoption of health policies (slogan and logo "Don't set alcohol to work").

- Information sessions provided to 299 companies in the Valpolicella stone-working district;
- Information sessions to 218 logistics companies in the ULSS 22 area;
- 5 training sessions, involving the 46 restaurants.

2.5. Success factors

The promoters use a structured and focused approach to this campaign. Initially, they used surveys to supplement existing information, to determine the scope of the problem. These data provided them with a focus on what should be done. As the surveys showed that individuals drink more alcohol in restaurants, and that those who were over the limit had either a bitter liqueur, or a coffee with liqueur or an alcoholic drink at the end of the meal, it was feasible to target this sector in the campaign.

The majority of the restaurants that the promoters approached agreed to participate in the campaign.

A large number of companies received information on the need to address alcohol consumption during working hours.

The promotional campaign continued into 2009 and from the 147 new restaurants that were approached, 127 agreed to support the "Don't leave a bitter in your mouth" (Non lasciamoci con l'amaro in bocca) and "Let's give safety a hand" (Diamo una mano alla sicurezza) campaigns. Also, of the 23 restaurants, that joined the campaigns in 2008, in 2009, 20 of them were actively involved still in the campaigns. Most interestingly, two of the larger companies in the Verona province got involved: Gardaland, the biggest amusement park in Italy, and the company that manages the Brescia-Padua highway.

2.6. Further information

Further information is available at: http://www.ulss22.ven.it/context.jsp?ID_LINK=1532&area=7

dott. Emilio Cipriani

A.Ulss 22 Bussolengo

Dipartimento di Prevenzione - SPISAL

via Crocefissa di Rosa (c/o Ospedale)

37067 Valeggio sul Mincio (VR)

tel. Diretto 045 6338593

tel. segreteria 045 6338599



fax 045 6338645

e-mail: ecipriani@ulss22.ven.it

2.7. Transferability

This project is easily transferred to other countries. Firstly, researchers worldwide collect data through surveys and these could provide information to support a health promotion campaign for a specific area. In this way, local information ensures that the campaign will meet the needs of that area.

Secondly, the promoters obtained the support of the local businesses in providing information and changing practices, such as the restaurants no longer offering a liqueur at the end of a meal. As such, the community was involved which would help in obtaining a more successful result. This approach could be used in other countries.

3. References, resources:

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- (4) Gilvarry, E., McArdle, P., 'Drug and alcohol use in the young', *Psychiatry*, Vol. 3, No. 1, 2004, pp. 58-61.
- (5) Kelly, A. B., Kowalyszyn, M., 'The association of alcohol and family problems in a remote indigenous Australian community', *Addictive Behaviors*, Vol. 28, No 4, 2003, pp. 761-767.
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