

## **OurFutures: Universal prevention programs for adolescents targeting substance use and mental ill-health**

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**Introduction and Aims:** Substance use and mental ill-health are leading causes of disability among youth. *OurFutures* (formerly 'Climate Schools') are internet-based programs designed to prevent substance use and mental ill-health among adolescents. Co-designed with students, teachers and health professionals, the courses utilise cartoon storylines, quizzes, and activities, to educate and empower students. This presentation provides an overview of the effectiveness and reach of *OurFutures* along with future research directions.

**Design and Methods:** To date, five *OurFutures* modules have been developed and evaluated through eight cluster randomised controlled trials (240 schools, >21,000 students): 1) Alcohol; 2) Alcohol & Cannabis; 3) Cannabis & Psychostimulants; 4) MDMA & Emerging Drugs; and 5) Mental Health.

**Results:** Compared to health education as usual, students who received *OurFutures* showed a reduction in alcohol and other drug use and related harms, reduced psychological distress, and improved knowledge about substance use and mental health at 3-year follow-up, and reduced harmful use of alcohol at 7-year follow-up. Students also found the cartoons to be enjoyable and interesting, and teachers rated the education quality highly. Now publicly available, the programs have been accessed by >1,245 schools (>34,000 students, >3,000 teachers).

**Discussions and Conclusions:** *OurFutures* provides schools with high-quality, evidence-based prevention programs that can be readily accessed via the internet to empower young people to improve their health and wellbeing. Future directions include the development and evaluation of a module to prevent e-cigarette use, international adaptations, and plans to upscale the program to maximise accessibility and student well-being.

**Implications for Translational Research:** *OurFutures* has generated crucial knowledge by showing that universal internet-based programs can be effective in preventing substance use and mental ill-health among youth, and can be easily adapted and scaled within a range of contexts.

### **Disclosure of Interest Statement:**

*NN and MT are the directors of Climate Schools Pty Ltd. An Australian company set up in 2015 to distribute the OurFutures resources.*