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| **Title of Research Presentation** (Sentence case)Reaching the hard to reach: Ensuring 18-24 year olds Don’t Drink and Drown |
| **Maximum 2500 characters (including spaces but excluding title) 2444****Background/Objectives**Alcohol consumption is a risk factor for drowning. Alcohol impairs judgement, coordination, slows reaction time and increases risk-taking behaviour. Consequently alcohol consumption in and around water is a public health concern.In Western Australia (WA), the highest rate of alcohol-related drowning occurred in young males. In the past 5 years, there have been 17 fatal drowning deaths in this age group. In cases with toxicology reports, almost half had consumed alcohol and two-thirds recorded a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) above 0.05, which, in Australia, is the legal limit for alcohol consumption whilst driving. Don’t Drink and Drown (DDD) is a health promotion program which aims to raise awareness amongst young people aged 15-24 years living in WA about the risks associated with drinking alcohol and participating in aquatic activities. The DDD program engages effectively with current and recently graduated high school students utilising school presentations, health EXPOs, and attendance at Leaver events (year 12 graduation celebrations traditionally held near the beach). This study aims to better understand the needs of a subset of the target group (aged 18-24 years) that historically have been difficult to reach.**Methods**Focus groups (n=6) are being conducted with young people aged between 18 – 24 years. Participants were recruited through universities, workplace and other youth groups. Group discussions were coded thematically using constructs from the Health Belief Model to explore alcohol use and water safety, social media engagement and current recognition of the DDD Program.**Results**Preliminary results suggest participants are aware of the harms of drinking whilst participating in aquatic activities but do not perceive themselves at risk. Participants could recall drowning media messaging and campaigns, however, could not clearly distinguish between DDD campaign and other media campaigns. Potential cues to action include the use of dark humour, aesthetically pleasing photos and action shots of real people as likely to increase their engagement in social media. **Discussion**The findings have the potential to inform future iterations of the DDD program to ensure the strategies are pertinent and relevant to engage those in the target group who are legally able to drink alcohol.**Keywords**Young people, drowning prevention, alcohol, focus groups, social media, Health Belief Model |