

Play it again: How mass media campaigns can reduce smoking prevalence

Professor Melanie Wakefield

Abstract

This presentation will focus on trends in smoking prevalence among adolescents and adults as a context against which to consider the role and effectiveness of mass media campaigns in tobacco control. The presentation will consider the multiple pathways by which mass media campaigns can exert their effects on changing social norms about tobacco use, setting the agenda for tobacco policy change, prompting quit attempts and preventing relapse in adult smokers, and discouraging the adoption of smoking among youth. We will review the evidence that mass media campaigns can reduce adolescent smoking and prompt adult cessation, and consider new evidence from Australia that is seeking to identify the mix of media and policy strategies that are most likely to have accounted for declines in adult smoking prevalence over the past 15 years. The session will examine what we know about how much media we need, over what period we need for it to be broadcast, and what kind of ad characteristics are most likely to generate desired outcomes. The presentation will also feature a discussion of research priorities for the future.