



Case Report

1	Case Number	0209/12
2	Advertiser	Drug & Alcohol Services South Australia
3	Product	Community Awareness
4	Type of Advertisement / media	TV
5	Date of Determination	13/06/2012
6	DETERMINATION	Dismissed

ISSUES RAISED

2.3 - Violence Community service advertising

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

The advertisement shows a young girl (approx. late teens, early twenties) in the back of an ambulance being treated for alcohol poisoning. The paramedic is talking to her and advises that he's going to suction vomit from her mouth so that she doesn't choke.

THE COMPLAINT

A sample of comments which the complainant/s made regarding this advertisement included the following:

I believe there are most certainly alternatives to advertising don't drink message through media without subjecting viewers to witness people vomiting! These ads also appear to air most commonly during breakfast and dinner time which for those who may be eating or having just eaten presents a truly disturbing premise. I do understand the importance of trying to get the underlying message across however the Government currently is running at least seven separate ads that I can recall with the same message so why not use the ones that are not offensive!

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

Comments which the advertiser made in response to the complainant/s regarding this advertisement include the following:

Thank you for your email of 18 May 2012 (complaint reference number 0209) regarding the 'Drink too much, you're asking for trouble' 15-second television advertisement known as 'Ambo'.

The 'Drink too much, you're asking for trouble' campaign was launched on 18 April 2011. It includes the television advertisement referred to by the complainant, known as 'Ambo', which is part of a suite of four 15-second adverts all with the tagline, 'Drink too much, you're asking for trouble'.

The suite of television advertisements is aimed at males aged 18 to 39 years and females aged 18 to 29 years. These demographics are the most likely to drink at risky levels and hence put themselves and others at risk of the serious consequences of drinking too much as depicted in the campaign advertising:

- A young woman being humiliated by her peers ('Friends')*
- A young woman being treated in an ambulance for alcohol poisoning ('Ambo')*
- A young man being arrested for an alcohol-fuelled assault ('Paddy Wagon')*
- A hung-over father vomiting in front of his young daughter ('Daughter').*

The suite of four television commercials is airing on selected free-to-air television stations around South Australia (7, 9, 10, SBS, One, WIN Mount Gambier, WIN Riverland GTSP TL Port Pirie and Port Lincoln).

Background

The main aim of the 'Drink too much, you're asking for trouble' campaign is to reduce the South Australian community's acceptance of public drunkenness. The campaign was developed to deliberately highlight the frequent and very real consequences of drinking too much and prompt people to think about how drinking too much can have a negative impact on themselves, their families and friends.

In Australia, alcohol misuse has a significant impact on health and safety, law enforcement and family services. Its impact is felt not only by the individuals who drink too much and their families, but also the wider community. It is estimated that alcohol misuse costs the Australian community more than \$15 billion annually¹.

In Australia, alcohol is responsible for, or contributes to:

- 30% of road accidents*
- 44% of fire injuries²*
- 34% of falls and drownings²*
- 16% of child abuse cases²*
- 12% of suicides²*
- 10% of industrial accidents²*
- In south Australia, approximately 7000 hospitalisations and 300 deaths each year³*

In 2010, more than 70,000 Australians were victims of alcohol-related assault⁴.

In 2008/09, in the Adelaide central business district:

- 58% of victim-reported crime was alcohol related.*
- 65% of serious assaults were alcohol related⁵.*
- 65% of minor assaults were alcohol related⁵.*
- 90 alcohol-related incidents of glassings occurred (smashed drink container used as a weapon).*

While drink driving and violence account for the largest proportion of harms, excessive alcohol consumption also results in a range of other harms including, but not limited to, unsafe sexual practices, sexual assault and family breakdown and public embarrassment or humiliation.

Research

The development of the 'Drink too much, you're asking for trouble' took into account findings from the previous 'Drink too much, it gets ugly' campaign (<http://www.alcohol.sa.gov.au/site/page.cfm?u=392>) targeted at males aged 18 to 39 years. Findings showed that, while the campaign was successful in generating brand awareness (prompted recall of 87%), it did not succeed in achieving its primary aim of reducing the acceptability of public drunkenness amongst the target group (55% in 2009 agree that it is acceptable to be drunk in public, compared with 54% in 2008).

Market research confirmed the need in the next campaign:

- to include a female specific advertisement in the campaign*
- to highlight serious and graphic consequences of drinking too much*
- pair the campaign tagline with more graphic imagery*
- develop new creative that was more impactful, relevant and motivational.*

The scenarios depicted in 'Drink too much, you're asking for trouble' were chosen from a selection of approximately 10 scenarios that were focus tested with the target audience (10 focus groups involving a total of 100 people).

Focus testing results for 'Ambo' highlighted that it educated the target audience on the dangers of drinking so much that you end up alcohol poisoning. Some participants were quoted saying "you never realise that people can get that bad".

The tagline, 'Drink too much, you're asking for trouble' was also focus tested with participants agreeing that this slogan fitted best with campaign scenarios depicting the serious consequences of drinking too much.

Addressing specific concerns

Prior to the development of the 'Ambo' scenario, DASSA met with SA Ambulance to determine the most realistic scenario to depict a person being treated for alcohol poisoning. Advice was sought from SA Ambulance in regards to how an intoxicated person would react when they're having their stomach pumped as well as the correct procedure and wording of a paramedic who is treating a person for alcohol poisoning.

SA Ambulance was then consulted throughout the different stages of development prior to the advert being finalised.

This scenario was chosen because alcohol poisoning is a common occurrence, particularly amongst females aged 18-29 years who quite often don't know their limits. It is concerning because not only are they putting their personal safety at risk, there are significant health consequences from intoxication, including death.

The 'Ambo' scenario relates to one of the 'Drink too much, you're asking for trouble' campaign's objectives, which aims to highlight the health/safety consequences of drinking too much.

AANA Advertiser Code of Ethics

DASSA believes that the 'Drink too much, you're asking for trouble' 'Ambo' advertisement is consistent with the AANA Advertiser Code of Ethics, particularly in relation to Section 2. In developing this campaign, due care has been taken to present the images in an appropriate and realistic manner, having regard for the target audience for whom the advertising is directed. The campaign materials are particularly targeted at males aged 18-39 years and females aged 18-29 years who drink alcohol regularly. Evidence shows that this is the group most likely to drink at risky levels in the community. Drinking at risky levels can lead to a range of harms - including health/safety, legal and social consequences. This particular advert focuses on the health/safety consequences of drinking too much.

AANA Code of Advertising for Children

The AANA Code of Advertising for Children states that 'advertisements to children must not portray images or events in a way that is unduly frightening or distressing to children.' This advertisement is not aimed at children with scheduling particularly targeted around shows

that females aged 18-29 and males aged 18-39 watch, and at times when these demographics are likely to be thinking about drinking alcohol, and times after alcohol has been consumed. We have also followed the advice given by the Commercials Advice Pty Ltd (CAD) by not screening the advert during any programs targeted specifically at children.

Placement and rating

CAD rated all four advertisements in the suite as PG, which means they are able to be shown in more time slots than an MA rated ad, namely 8.30am to 4pm weekdays, 7pm to 6am weekdays and 10am to 6am at weekends. Instead of choosing specific placements for each of the four individual advertisements, the South Australia Governments master media agency, MEC, advised that the adverts be rotated evenly within time slots where there is a high viewing by the target audience of males aged 18 to 39 and females aged 18 to 29. The CAD reference number for the 'Ambo' advertisement is PTWHGGOA.

Feedback to date has highlighted the accuracy and realistic nature of the 'Ambo' advertisement. From these reports, the television advertisement has been successful in raising awareness of the issue.

DASSA tracks the campaign's effectiveness through a comprehensive independent evaluation from a commissioned research agency. Findings from the tracking surveys help to determine appropriate media buys for future campaign bursts. All complaints and feedback are also taken into consideration.

I note that your procedures require that all complaints about advertisements for alcohol are to be referred to the ABAC Complaints Adjudication Panel. The 'Ambo' advertisement should not be confused with an advertisement for alcohol. The advertisement was developed to show a realistic negative outcome of drinking too much.

Summary

DASSA has developed a social marketing campaign around risky drinking in the community to help raise awareness of the issue and reduce harms associated with the common practice. We trust that the Advertising Standards Bureau members will support our assessment that the 15-second 'Ambo' television commercial does not breach the AANA Advertise Code of Ethics. On these grounds, we request that the Advertising Standards Bureau dismiss these complaints.

Reference:

1 Collins T & Lapsley H (2008) The cost of tobacco, alcohol and illicit drug abuse to Australian Society in 2004-2005 Summary Version, National Drug Strategy Monograph Series No. 66. Canberra: Commonwealth Department of Health & Ageing

2 National Centre for Education and Training on Addiction (NCETA) Consortium. (2004), Alcohol and Other Drugs: A Handbook for Health Professionals. Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing.

3 Pascal,R. Chikritzhs,T. & Jones,P. (2009). Trends in estimated alcohol attributable deaths and hospitalisations in Australia, 1996-2005. National Alcohol Indicators, Bulletin No.12. Perth: National Drug Research Institute, Curtin University of Technology.

4 Roche,A.M, Bywood,P.T, Borlagdon,J, Lunnay,B, Freeman,T, Lawton,L, Tovell,A & Nicholas,R. (2007). Young People and Alcohol: The Role of Cultural Influences, National Centre for Education and Training on Addiction, South Australia.

5 SA Police website

http://www.sapolice.com.au/sapol/safety_security/alcohol_and_other_drugs/alcohol_and_crime.jsp

6 South Australia Police (July 2010). Alcohol and Crime Report

http://www.sapolice.com.au/sapol/safety_security/alcohol_and_other_drugs.jsp

THE DETERMINATION

The Advertising Standards Board (“Board”) considered whether this advertisement breaches Section 2 of the Advertiser Code of Ethics (the “Code”).

The Board noted the complainant’s concern that the advertisement depicts a woman vomiting which is not appropriate especially when played during meal times.

The Board noted that before television commercials go to air, they are screened by Free TV Australia, and given a rating which governs the time at which they can be shown. The Advertising Standards Board generally has no jurisdiction over the placement or timing of advertisements, except when considering whether the advertisement treated sex, sexuality and nudity with sensitivity to the relevant audience, so in this instance the Board cannot consider the placement of the advertisement, only the content.

The Board viewed the advertisement and noted the advertiser’s response.

The Board considered whether the advertisement was in breach of Section 2.3 of the Code. Section 2.3 of the Code states: “Advertising or Marketing Communications shall not present or portray violence unless it is justifiable in the context of the product or service advertised”.

The Board agreed that some members of the public would find the depictions of a woman reacting to excessive alcohol to be unpleasant. The Board considered that these images of the woman vomiting are relevant to the important public health and safety message that the advertisement is attempting to convey and are not so graphic as to breach the provisions of the Code.

The Board determined that the advertisement did not breach section 2.3 of the Code.

Finding that the advertisement did not breach the Code on other grounds, the Board dismissed the complaint.