



Case Report

1	Case Number	0491/12
2	Advertiser	Heart Foundation (Head Office)
3	Product	Community Awareness
4	Type of Advertisement / media	TV
5	Date of Determination	12/12/2012
6	DETERMINATION	Dismissed

ISSUES RAISED

2.3 - Violence Community Awareness

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

The 15 second TVC features real-life cardiologist Professor Ian Meredith talking to camera in an operating theatre environment and reinforcing it's OK to call Triple 000 if the viewer thinks they are having a heart attack. Professor Ian Meredith is wearing operating theatre clothing and gloves. The ad finishes with the Heart Foundation logo treatment and tagline:

Tag: It's OK to call 000.

Super: heartattackfacts.org.au

THE COMPLAINT

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

The doctor was talking with bloody gloves on. This was unnecessarily shocking. I can understand a gruesome still image to move someone to action, such as the photos featured on cigarette packets. However, a gruesome MOVING image is much more invasive and shocking. Visually, this ad seemed to cross over into the gore and horror that medical TV series elicit. Instead of delivering the message that going to hospital sooner rather than later is good, it filled me with terror. This is unnecessary and shouldn't be allowed.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

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

We have considered the complaint and the advertisement in question in light of the provisions of the AANA CODE OF ETHICS (the Code). We note that the nature of the complaint relates to the visual imagery of the doctor talking with bloody gloves on and that the ad in question contains material which the complainant claims was distressing to them.

We note that the complaint references section 2.3 of the Code (Violence Community Awareness) as being the relevant issue.

The Heart Foundation's Warning Signs of Heart Attack campaign is aimed at ensuring that all Australians can better identify, know and respond to the warning signs of heart attack. It also aims to educate Australians to recognise that heart attack is a life-threatening health issue, as almost 10,000 Australians die from heart attack each year. In the past year, over 55,000 Australians have had a heart attack – that is one heart attack every 10 minutes.

The harsh reality is that people are not recognising the warning signs of heart attack and are taking far too long (on average 3-4 hours) to seek emergency care, and this results in death and permanent heart muscle damage. Tragically, over 50% of heart attack deaths occur before the person reaches hospital and almost 25% of people who die from a heart attack die within one hour of their first warning sign. The Heart Foundation is committed to reducing this tragic statistic.

There are two TVCs in the Warning Signs campaign – a 45 second TVC and a 15 second TVC that have been designed to provide an emotional and rational appeal to reinforce the importance of learning the warning signs of heart attack and urgency of taking action (i.e. calling Triple 000) before it's too late.

The 45 second TVC features a confronting story of a man who has died from a heart attack, and is re-living the situations that he now recognises as warning signs that led up to his present condition. In the TVC, he regrets that he did not take action to prevent his death, and spare his family the pain his death will cause them (CAD Number MQY24PSE and Rating M and PG).

The 15 second TVC (which relates to complaint 0491/12) features real-life cardiologist Professor Ian Meredith talking to camera in an operating theatre environment and reinforcing it's OK to call Triple 000 if the viewer thinks they are having a heart attack. The TVC features a real-life cardiologist to add authenticity, credibility and believability to the campaign message, and therefore Professor Ian Meredith is wearing operating theatre clothing and gloves. In developing this TVC, the Heart Foundation obtained technical advice from both Professor Ian Meredith and a cardiac nurse to ensure the TVC was realistic and accurately portrayed an operating theatre environment.

Whilst confronting, the 15 second TVC is designed to cut through and shock the viewer into taking action and to demonstrate the seriousness and importance of the public safety message contained within the TVC. In our view, the advertisement is not contrary to Prevailing Community Standards on health and safety, but rather seeks to uphold and reinforce those same standards.

Significant focus group testing and market research was completed in developing the Warning Signs of Heart Attack campaign. The campaign was also piloted in Melbourne, Geelong and Broken Hill in October 2009 to measure the awareness, relevance and impact of the campaign. The evaluation indicated that the impact of the campaign was perceived positively by respondents. Almost all respondents believed that the campaign was believable, while the majority agreed that it made them stop and think about the information presented. It also commonly made viewers feel concerned about heart attack, encouraged them to speak

to others about heart attack and made them want to find out more.

The majority of respondents who had seen the Warning Signs campaign had thought about doing something in response. Most commonly, this was getting more information, being more aware or calling Triple 000 if needed. In addition, about half of the respondents had actually done something in response to the campaign, most commonly being more aware/conscious or improving lifestyle and/or diet.

Based on the success of the pilot program, the Warning Signs campaign was progressively rolled out in all states and territories during 2010-2011. The campaign has been aired nationally from October 2011 until the end of December 2012, and has continued to build on the public's awareness of heart attack symptoms, reinforce its OK to call Triple 000 and encourage behaviour to help save Australian lives.

Quantitative research conducted by the Heart Foundation during January to June 2012 has reinforced the Warning Signs of Heart Attack campaign is having an impact on the Australian public. Effectiveness, believability and communication of messages remain at the same levels in 2012 compared to the previous two years. In addition, those who have seen the advertisements continue to be significantly more aware of symptoms as well as the severity symptoms can present. They are also significantly more likely to be confident in knowing what to do if faced with having a heart attack, and more likely to state they would call Triple 000 regardless of the type of symptoms than people who have not seen the advertisements. Furthermore, they are significantly more likely to state they would not hesitate to call Triple 000, whereby those who have not seen the advertisements are significantly more likely to say they would not be comfortable.

We note the Advertising Standards Bureau has in the past considered complaints relating to advertisements of anti-smoking campaigns and road safety awareness campaigns, which have also contained confronting and sometimes graphic imagery. In almost all of those cases, we note that the Board has consistently stated that a higher level of graphic imagery is recognised as being justifiable in public education campaigns, because of the important public health and safety messages that are intended to convey, and further, that such compelling detail and "shock" may be necessary to be effective in these types of advertisements.

In addition, the Advertising Standards Bureau previously considered the 45 second TVC of the Warning Signs of Heart Attack campaign in the context of a complaint that it "causes alarm and distress". The matter was considered as case number 0273/10 and was dismissed. A copy of the ASB Case Report is attached for ease of reference.

In our view, there is a direct correlation between case 0273/10 and the matter now under consideration. That being the case, we would submit that there is scope for similar considerations to apply here, as the importance of being able to recognise the signs of a heart attack is an important safety message for all Australians, and has comparable significance to messages of road safety or anti-smoking. In summary, we submit that the advertisement does not breach any provision of the Code. While we acknowledge that the advertisement may be confronting for some, we sought to act in the best interests of the community by informing them of an important safety message, and to do so in a manner which serves to best highlight the impact of that message.

If you require any further assistance or information please do not hesitate in contacting the writer.

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 complainants' concerns that the advertisement features a gruesome depiction of a doctor with his gloves covered in blood which is inappropriate.

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 noted that the advertisement features a doctor speaking to the camera outside of an operating theatre informing the viewer about the best course of action to take in the event of a possible heart attack. The Doctor is wearing surgical gloves that have some blood on them and on his theatre robe.

The Board noted that the advertisement was given a 'W' rating by CAD and that the advertisement includes a real-life cardiologist to add authenticity, credibility and believability to the message.

The Board noted that in the past it has considered complaints relating to advertisements of anti-smoking campaigns and road safety awareness campaigns, (such as 0336/12 and 0291/12) which have also contained confronting and sometimes graphic imagery. The Board has consistently stated that a higher level of graphic imagery is recognised as being justifiable in public education campaigns, because of the important public health and safety messages that are intended to convey, and further, that such compelling detail and "shock" may be necessary to be effective in these types of advertisements.

The Board noted that in this instance, the visuals of the doctor in a hospital scenario with visible blood on his hands may be confronting and alarming to viewers, including children. However the Board considered that the blood on the hands was not a strong focus of the advertisement and that the message being delivered in the advertisement was extremely important to the community.

In the Board's view the advertisement presents violence in a manner that is justifiable in the context of the service being advertised.

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.