



CASE REPORT

1. Complaint reference number	260/07
2. Advertiser	Prostate Survival Alliance
3. Product	Community Awareness
4. Type of advertisement	TV
5. Nature of complaint	Language – use of language – section 2.5
6. Date of determination	Tuesday, 14 August 2007
7. DETERMINATION	Dismissed

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

There are two television advertisements featuring males and females. The male advertisement features three men, one wearing a blue singlet, who tells us "My wife made me get a little prick"; a tradesman in overalls saying "She wanted me to get a little prick by Friday - so I did. You don't mess with my wife"; and a businessman relating "I got sick of my wife's nagging - so I decided to get a little prick". The version featuring three women is worded "I made my husband get a little prick"; "I wasn't going to let my husband get away with it any longer. I booked him in for a little prick this week"; and "I told my husband not to come home till he got a little prick!"

In both advertisements the three men are then shown in a doctor's surgery having a blood test as a female voiceover advises "One in eight men over 50 will get prostate cancer. If detected early, the cure rate is high. Yes, a single prick at your doctor's surgery is all that is needed to measure your PSA level." At the end of both advertisements the men and women add "Go on, do it for your wife. Do it for your family. Get a little prick this week".

THE COMPLAINT

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

I would like to express my concern at the poor attempt of making people get tested for prostate cancer. The advertisement is appalling. It's not funny. I really do not appreciate that now they have taught my 6yr old the word PRICK! If such bad language is used like that it should be late at night when there is no children around. The commercial is even shown during a childrens program. PRICK is offensive.

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

Comments which the advertiser made in response to the complaint/s regarding this advertisement included the following:

I acknowledge that the words "little prick" could be taken to be offensive, dependant upon the context in which those words might be used...an actor suggesting that they "get a little prick" or have been told to "get a little prick" is neither directed at any person in an offensive context or used with other words which would in any way directly indicate an intention to create offence. In fact great consideration was given to the addition of an icon of a hypodermic syringe to the pamphlets, posters and the TV ads, these icons can be clearly seen. Certainly the TV ads were intended to make the observer prick up their ears when they heard them, also to prick their conscience in order to take the test, and further, also to prick them into action and perhaps save lives.

The TV advertisement immediately clarifies the fact that it is promoting a "little prick with a needle at your local doctor's". It attempts to create a light-hearted approach to a sombre subject

and very quickly clarifies precisely what the intention of the TV ad is...People are taking notice of the TV ads, and in the great majority, are not viewing them as offensive.

The footage was reviewed by CAD which gave it a PG rating. The complainant places a great deal of weight on the fact that (a) six year old child has learned the word "prick" from the TV ad...It would be a reasonable conclusion that for a child of six to associate the word "prick" with a penis, someone must have, at the very least, provided limited information...

It is my respectful assertion that whilst the complainant has a right to express (a) feeling of offence her views and feelings are not necessarily shared by the majority of community minded citizens who have applauded the use of a colourful turn of phrase to catch attention and indeed to ultimately save many lives in the community.

THE DETERMINATION

The Advertising Standards Board ("Board") considered whether this advertisement breaches Section 2 of the Advertiser Code of Ethics (the "Code") in particular Section 2.5 which requires that language used in advertisements be appropriate and that strong or obscene language must not be used.

The Board noted the advertisement's light hearted use of the term 'prick' in an advertisement to encourage men to have checks for prostate cancer. The Board considered that the use of the term 'prick' was clearly meant as a double entendre that would be considered humorous by an adult audience but that in this advertisement there are no images or sexual references that would create confusion for a young viewing audience. The Board considered that it is clear in the advertisement that the people are referring to the prick from a needle as part of a blood test. The Board considered it unlikely that children, particularly young children, would by themselves associate the word with a man's penis or something other than a needle.

The Board considered that most members of the public and the health profession would consider this type of blood test to have an important public health benefit.

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