



Australian Government
Australian Research Council

EI
2018
ENGAGEMENT
AND IMPACT



Engagement and Impact 2018

The University of New South Wales

NSW17 (HLS) - Impact

Overview

Title

(Title of the impact study)

Empowering young people to make positive choices: innovative research translation and an online portal for drug education and prevention programs

Unit of Assessment

17 - Psychology and Cognitive Sciences

Additional FoR codes

(Identify up to two additional two-digit FoRs that relate to the overall content of the impact study.)

13 - Education

11 - Medical and Health Sciences

Socio-Economic Objective (SEO) Codes

(Choose from the list of two-digit SEO codes that are relevant to the impact study.)

92 - Health

93 - Education and Training

Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification (ANZSIC) Codes

(Choose from the list of two-digit ANZSIC codes that are relevant to the impact study.)

80 - Preschool and School Education

Keywords

(List up to 10 keywords related to the impact described in Part A.)

prevention

education

internet

school based

mental health

depression

anxiety

substance use

young people

drug and alcohol

Sensitivities

Commercially sensitive

No

Culturally sensitive

No

Sensitivities description

(Please describe any sensitivities in relation to the impact study that need to be considered, including any particular instructions for ARC staff or assessors, or for the impact study to be made publicly available after EI 2018.)

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research flag

*(Is this impact study associated with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content?
NOTE - institutions may identify impact studies where the impact, associated research and/or approach to impact relates to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, nations, communities, language, place, culture and*

knowledges and/or is undertaken with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, nations, and/or communities.)

No

Science and Research Priorities

(Does this impact study fall within one or more of the Science and Research Priorities?)

Yes

Science and Research Priority	Practical Research Challenge
Health	Better models of health care and services that improve outcomes, reduce disparities for disadvantaged and vulnerable groups, increase efficiency and provide greater value for a given expenditure.

Impact

Summary of the impact

(Briefly describe the specific impact in simple, clear English. This will enable the general community to understand the impact of the research.)

Climate Schools is a suite of evidence-based digital interventions in the form of curriculum-consistent health education courses for secondary school students. Climate Schools trials have shown the programs are effective in improving alcohol, cannabis and psycho-stimulant-related knowledge, decreasing alcohol use and binge drinking, decreasing frequency of cannabis use, decreasing intentions to use ecstasy, and reducing truancy rates and psychological distress, up to three years following the interventions. This and other drug and alcohol prevention materials developed by UNSW researchers are available on Positive Choices, a national drug prevention online portal developed to help schools and other communities access evidence-based information and drug prevention programs.

Beneficiaries

(List up to 10 beneficiaries related to the impact study)

- young Australians (13-19 years of age)
- community groups associated with young people
- Australian and international teachers
- parents and families
- Australian Government Department of Health
- all Australian state and territory governments
- local government agencies
- police
- health care practitioners

Countries in which the impact occurred

(Search the list of countries and add as many as relate to the location of the impact)

Australia
United States of America
England
Russian Federation
Canada

Details of the impact

(Provide a narrative that clearly outlines the research impact. The narrative should explain the relationship between the associated research and the impact. It should also identify the contribution the research has made beyond academia, including:

- *who or what has benefitted from the results of the research (this should identify relevant research end-users, or beneficiaries from industry, the community, government, wider public etc.)*
- *the nature or type of impact and how the research made a social, economic, cultural, and/or environmental impact*
- *the extent of the impact (with specific references to appropriate evidence, such as cost-benefit-analysis, quantity of those affected, reported benefits etc.)*
- *the dates and time period in which the impact occurred.*

NOTE - the narrative must describe only impact that has occurred within the reference period, and must not make aspirational claims.)

Substance use disorders are among the leading causes of burden of disease in young people across the world. Therefore, initiatives that can reduce this use can have a significant impact. Early initiation to alcohol and other drugs is a risk factor for the development of substance use disorders, mental health problems, juvenile offending, and impaired educational performance, all of which negatively impact on current functioning and future life options. Every year, alcohol and other drugs cost the Australian community \$23.5 billion and fewer than one in four Australians will ever access treatment for their substance use problem. Effective prevention is therefore critical to delay first use, halt the development of disorder, and prevent the onset of co-occurring disorders.

Although preventive interventions are cost-effective, currently only 1.7% of total health expenditure in Australia is spent on prevention, less than two-thirds of all other OECD countries. This is extremely concerning as every year of delay of the onset of drinking reduces the risk of developing an alcohol disorder by almost 10%. UNSW researchers have contributed to addressing this problem through the innovative 'Climate Schools' programs and by providing access to a range of evidence-based prevention programs through the translation portal 'Positive Choices'.

Climate Schools provides curriculum-consistent health education courses for young people aged 13-19 years. These were developed in close collaboration with teachers, students and education specialists, to ensure fit within the school health curriculum and appeal to students of all learning styles.

Through an innovative translation model, using digital technologies, research undertaken by Professor Teesson and team at the Centre of Research Excellence in Mental Health and Substance Use (CREMS) at the National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre (NDARC) UNSW, has had wide-reaching impact on policy and practice and on the lives of Australians, particularly young Australians. Blending psychological research, new technology and the ancient art of storytelling through cartoons, they built scalable evidence-based programs to prevent the harms associated with alcohol and drug use.

The interventions were trialled in 157 Australian secondary schools with over 14,000 students. Results demonstrated the Climate Schools programs to be effective in improving alcohol, cannabis and psycho-stimulant-related knowledge, decreasing uptake of alcohol use and binge drinking, decreasing frequency of cannabis use, decreasing intentions to use ecstasy, and reducing truancy rates and psychological distress, up to three years following the interventions.

For example, in a trial of the Alcohol and Cannabis course, at the three-year follow-up, 35% of adolescents in the control group reported binge drinking in past 6 months compared to 27% of those that received the Climate Schools alcohol and cannabis program.

Climate Schools research has contributed significantly to high school education policy and practice; for example, in 2013, the 'Climate Schools: Alcohol and Cannabis module' was reviewed by, and included on, the prestigious US 'National Register of Evidence-based Programs and Practices', and in 2014, the 'Climate Schools: Alcohol

and Cannabis course' was included in the National Centre for Education and Training on Addiction (NCETA) 'Alcohol Education: What really works in Schools' policy document for schools, and was given three stars for effectiveness - the highest rating.

Climate Schools research trials have been cited in a number of reviews and meta-analyses (including two Cochrane reviews) examining the effectiveness of drug prevention. One review indicated that Climate Schools was one of only three alcohol education programs rated as having 'good evidence of effect'.

Through the translation model and the innovative Australian Government-funded translation portal Positive Choices, 392 schools and 32 organisations working with young people have formally registered to use the Climate Schools programs, reaching over 10,000 unique users and 1 in 10 high schools in Australia. The Positive Choices portal was launched in 2015 and has had impact at national and international levels. By 2016, the Positive Choices resources had been viewed 390,136 times, by 53,107 users in Australia and around the world.

In addition, given the success of the Climate Schools research trials in 2015, the Climate Schools programs were commercialised through Climate Schools Pty Ltd and made available internationally to schools in the UK and the US directly through the Climate Schools website. In 2016, there were 119,058 page views by 10,712 unique visitors.

The project's community impact has also included distribution of 186,000 hard copy booklets to each of the 3072 secondary schools across Australia, and other interested organisations including libraries, drug and alcohol support services, medical centres, police, government departments, hospitals and treatment centres and more.

Positive Choices has been recognised within the education and research community with invitations to present workshops, seminars and at national conferences. It has been endorsed by peak bodies including Principals Australia Institute and The Mental Health Services (TheMHS) Learning Network, and its impact has been recognised by the Australian Rotary Health Knowledge Dissemination Award for excellence in bridging the gap between knowledge gained through research and the dissemination of that knowledge to clinicians, consumers and carers, and its implementation into policy and practice.

Associated research

(Briefly describe the research that led to the impact presented for the UoA. The research must meet the definition of research in Section 1.9 of the EI 2018 Submission Guidelines. The description should include details of:

- what was researched
- when the research occurred
- who conducted the research and what is the association with the institution)

Between 2002 and 2016, six randomised controlled trials were conducted by researchers at the Centre of Research Excellence in Mental Health and Substance Use (CREMS) and the National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre (NDARC), UNSW, and national and international collaborators, to evaluate the efficacy and effectiveness of the Climate Schools programs.

Results from these trials have demonstrated the Climate Schools programs to be effective in increasing alcohol, cannabis and psycho-stimulant related knowledge, decreasing uptake of alcohol use and binge drinking, decreasing frequency of cannabis use, decreasing intentions to use ecstasy, and reducing truancy rates and psychological distress, up to three years following the interventions.

The results have been published in leading journals such as 'Psychological Medicine' and 'Addiction' and presented at over 60 national and International conferences, providing world-first evidence that online interventions for drug prevention can be effective. In addition, the studies have been cited in reviews and meta-analyses (including two Cochrane reviews) and featured in national and international media.

A formal evaluation of the Positive Choices portal was conducted postlaunch (in 2016), guided by the Reach, Effectiveness, Adoption, Implementation and Maintenance (RE-AIM) model to determine public health impact.

FoR of associated research

(Up to three two-digit FoRs that best describe the associated research)

17 - Psychology and Cognitive Sciences

References (up to 10 references, 350 characters per reference)

(This section should include a list of up to 10 of the most relevant research outputs associated with the impact)

Newton NC, Teesson M, Barrett EL, Slade T, Conrod PJ (2012) The CAP study, evaluation of integrated universal and selective prevention strategies for youth alcohol misuse: study protocol of a cluster randomized controlled trial, *BMC Psychiatry* 12:118.

Champion KE, Teesson M, Newton NC (2013) A cluster randomised controlled trial of the Climate Schools: Ecstasy and Emerging Drugs Module in Australian secondary schools: study protocol, *BMC Public Health* 13:1168.

Newton NC, Andrews G, Champion KE, Teesson M (2014) Universal Internet-based prevention for alcohol and cannabis use reduces truancy, psychological distress and moral disengagement: a cluster randomised controlled trial, *Prev Med.* 65:109-15.

Teesson M, Newton NC, Slade T, Chapman C, Allsop S, Hides L, McBride N, Mewton L, Tonks Z, Birrell L, Brownhill L, Andrews G (2014) The CLIMATE schools combined study: a cluster randomised controlled trial of a universal Internet-based prevention program for youth substance misuse, depression and anxiety. *BMC Psychiatry* 14:32.

Vogl LE, Newton NC, Champion KE, Teesson M. (2014) A universal harm-minimisation approach to preventing psychostimulant and cannabis use in adolescents: a cluster randomised controlled trial. *Subst Abuse Treat Prev Policy.* 18(9):24.

Barrett EL, Newton NC, Teesson M, Slade T, Conrod PJ. (2015) Adapting the personality-targeted Preventure program to prevent substance use and associated harms among high-risk Australian adolescents, *Early Interv Psychiatry* 9(4):308-15.

Champion KE, Newton NC, Stapinski L, Slade T, Barrett EL, Teesson M. (2015) A cross-validation trial of an Internet-based prevention program for alcohol and cannabis: Preliminary results from a cluster randomised controlled trial. *Aust NZ J Psychiatry* 50(1):64-73.

Champion KE, Teesson M, Newton NC (2015) Development of a universal internet-based prevention program for ecstasy and new psychoactive substances. *Open Journal of Preventive Medicine* 5:23-30.

Newton NC, Conrod PJ, Slade T, Carragher N, Champion KE, Barrett EL, Kelly EV, Nair NK, Stapinski L, Teesson M. (2016) The long-term effectiveness of a selective, personality-targeted prevention program in reducing alcohol use and related harms: a cluster randomized controlled trial. *J Child Psychol Psychiatry* 57(9):1056-65.

Champion KE, Newton NC, Stapinski LA, Teesson M (2016) Effectiveness of a universal internet-based

prevention program for ecstasy and new psychoactive substances: a cluster randomized controlled trial. *Addiction* 111(8):1396-405.

Additional impact indicator information

Additional impact indicator information

(Provide information about any indicators not captured above that are relevant to the impact study, for example return on investment, jobs created, improvements in quality of life years (QALYs). Additional indicators should be quantitative in nature and include:

- name of indicator (100 characters)*
- data for indicator (200 characters)*
- brief description of indicator and how it is calculated (300 characters.)*