

Monday, 20 November 2023

Choose to protect yourself – always use a condom

Sexual health campaign evaluation



Summary

During February and March 2023, the Public Health Agency (PHA) ran Choose to protect yourself a sexual health multi-channel advertising campaign. The campaign was a re-run of the sexual health campaign which was last broadcast in 2016 and evaluated positively. The campaign included a number of new elements developed to promote the Northern Ireland online testing service for sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

The campaign aim was to promote good sexual health and contribute to reducing STIs in Northern Ireland.

The campaign target audience was adults aged 16-34 years living in Northern Ireland. People in this age group account for approximately 80% of new STI diagnoses.

Recognition: More than eight out of 10 (84%) people in the target audience could recall having seen or heard at least one of the campaign elements.

Positive actions: One in two (50%) of those exposed to the campaign reported doing something as a direct result. Furthermore, almost two out of three (69%) of those considered 'at risk' of sexually transmitted infection (STI) due to multiple partners / unprotected sex were more likely to say they had done something as a result of the campaign.

Background

The Choose to protect yourself campaign aims to promote sexual health and wellbeing and contribute to the strategic objectives and priorities of the Department of Health's sexual health promotion strategy and action plan. The campaign focuses on one of the strategy's key objectives to reduce the incidence of STIs.

In Northern Ireland (NI), sexually transmitted infections (STIs) are diagnosed through Genitourinary Medicine (GUM) clinics or via the NI online STI testing service (currently SH24). Established during the pandemic, the online service has increased access to STI testing. In 2021 combined online and GUM clinic testing was 41% higher than in 2020.¹

In recent years there have been increases in the diagnosis of a number of STIs and while some of this can be attributed to increased testing, increases in overall positivity of samples within the online service and consistency with broader trends in STI transmission in Republic of Ireland, also indicate increased STI transmission. The highest diagnostic rates of the common STIs occur in people aged 16-34 years who account for 80% of new STIs.

The Choose to protect yourself campaign targeted people aged 16 to 34 years and focused on increasing awareness of the risks associated with unprotected sex, improving attitudes towards using condoms to protect against STIs and encouraging uptake of STI/HIV testing among those who engage in risky sexual behaviour.



1. Public Health Agency. STI surveillance in Northern Ireland 2022: An analysis of data for the calendar year 2021. Belfast: PHA, 2022. <https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/sites/default/files/2023-01/STI%20Report%202021%20tables%20and%20charts%20%202021%20data%20%20-%20final.pdf>

The Choose to protect yourself sexual health campaign evaluation provides post-campaign evaluation results based on the findings from a quantitative survey with a representative sample of the adult population.

The evaluation includes measures to assess campaign reach and impact.

Details

Format

3 pages, A4, PDF only

Target group

Professionals, public

Downloads

Attachment

Size

[Choose to protect yourself sexual health campaign evaluation 2022-2023](#) 453.13 KB

Tags

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