# Research to inform national campaign on alcohol, pregnancy and breastfeeding

In 2020, FARE commissioned Kantar Public to examine alcohol and pregnancy campaigns conducted in Australia and internationally to understand the methods, outcomes, impacts, and evaluation results. The research methodology comprised:

* A review of the literature to identify a best practice approach to health promotion and campaigns about alcohol and pregnancy, including identifying potential key target audiences.
* Key informant interviews (n = 15) with people who have experience designing and delivering campaigns about alcohol and pregnancy and/or other expertise in this field.
* A review of existing (global) campaigns and resources on alcohol consumption during pregnancy.

## Key findings

* The review found a paucity of robust evaluations for existing alcohol and pregnancy campaigns. This means there is only limited evidence to support or reject the use of potentially promising approaches suggested by researchers in this field.
* There is, however, some evidence that threat and loss-framed messaging is likely to have a greater influence on behaviour than messaging that is solely supportive or gain-framed, as long as the message is perceived to be providing believable information to facilitate informed choices (although this evidence is based mainly on concept testing rather than a full evaluation of ‘real world’ behavioural outcomes).
* Similarly, there is little evidence of the impact of specific imagery on attitudes, beliefs and behaviour. When considering the use of threat appeals and/or shocking imagery, the potential effectiveness needs to be weighed against the potential risk of negative unintended consequences as well as, most importantly, reactions of specific target audiences via formal concept testing.
* This review recommended the need for primary research to undertake detailed segmentations of target audiences based on underlying beliefs, attitudes, needs and motivations to identify whether there are defined groups that would respond more positively to tailored messaging and/or different modes of delivery. This would require:
	+ A quantitative segmentation of women aged 18-44, to identify the size and profile of those with different attitudes/behaviours around alcohol use in pregnancy. This should provide insight into how the specific segments fall out in terms of demographics, including age and consideration of pregnancy as a personally relevant issue, as well as media preferences. Through this approach target audiences can be narrowed down, and communications can be tailored to individual segments more effectively.
	+ Qualitative research with the intended target audience/s (once confirmed through the segmentation) to elicit a more in-depth understanding of their knowledge, attitudes and perceptions, including (potentially) testing selected concepts from previous global campaigns, as well as messaging territories stemming from this research and the segmentation. Qualitative research will provide greater insight into the relative strength of barriers and drivers for target segments including the strength and balance of unconscious influences versus conscious attitudes and beliefs, allowing messaging to be prioritised.

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