# Women Want to Know project evaluation

## Researcher

1. Hall & Partners Open Mind

## Summary

The Women Want to Know (WWTK) project was launched by the Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE) in mid-2014. The project encourages health professionals to routinely discuss alcohol and pregnancy with women, and to provide advice consistent with the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) Australian guidelines to reduce health risks from drinking alcohol. The NHMRC Guidelines state that maternal alcohol consumption can harm the developing fetus or breastfeeding baby, and therefore recommend that for women who are pregnant, planning a pregnancy or breastfeeding, not drinking is the safest option.

WWTK was developed in collaboration with leading health professional bodies, and supported by funding from the Australian Government Department of Health.

The project involved two main components:

* Accredited training to provide health professionals with information and tools to enable discussions about alcohol and pregnancy. These training modules were delivered online via the Australian College of Midwives (ACM), Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) and the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RANZCOG).
* Resources to support health professionals to discuss alcohol and pregnancy with women. This comprised of three leaflets for health professionals and one for patients, plus eight videos which were made available as part of the online training course, through the Department of Health (DoH) YouTube playlist, and via the WWTK website ([www.alcohol.gov.au](https://www.alcohol.gov.au/internet/alcohol/publishing.nsf/Content/wwtk)).

Hall & Partners Open Mind were engaged by FARE to conduct a thorough independent evaluation of the Women Want to Know project.

## Outcomes

* Overall, the WWTK project was successful in reaching a reasonable proportion of the target health professionals, given the scope of the project and the challenges involved in achieving ‘cut-through’ among this hard-to-reach audience.
* The two training courses that could be assessed as part of this evaluation (ACM and RANZCOG) were successful in positively impacting the attitudes and behaviour of participating professionals, according to feedback from training participants.
* Take-up and completion of the online training, especially among GPs and fully qualified specialists, would ideally have been higher given that this was deemed a core part of the WWTK strategy.
* The CPD accreditation for the WWTK was not sufficiently motivating on its own to prompt health professionals to take-up the course.
* Comparison of the benchmark and post-intervention online survey results show that the WWTK project did not result in statistically significant levels of attitudinal or behaviour change among the overall target audience of health professionals.
* The WWTK resources reportedly had a positive impact on knowledge, attitudes and/or behaviour among at least some health professionals, but a number of key weaknesses were also identified. In particular, the sheer volume of information contained in the leaflets was off-putting and meant that important messages were missed.
* Separate resources and promotional materials would ideally have been developed for midwives and GPs/specialists.
* Future efforts to increase awareness and understanding of the Alcohol Guidelines among health professionals should ideally be accompanied by a wider awareness raising campaign targeted at the public.

## Recommendations

It is recommended that the WWTK project be continued, but with a focus on promoting the take-up of training, rather than the wide-scale distribution of leaflets as standalone resources. There would also certainly be value in a separate yet complementary campaign aimed at raising awareness of the Alcohol Guidelines among the general public.

A full list of recommendations drawn from the evaluation, summarised against each of the objectives, is contained in the report. These will be relevant for informing best practice for other preventive health projects or future iterations of WWTK.

[view the report](https://fare.org.au/wp-content/uploads/WWTK-Evaluation-Report-Final-September-2016.pdf)

[view the media release](https://fare.org.au/alcohol-and-pregnancy-preventive-health-campaign-a-success-but-lessons-learnt/)