

CITATION

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International
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Evidence Synthesis on Road Safety Communication Strategies



Key Findings

- Campaigns that are grounded on a solid theoretical foundation (e.g., behavior change theory) have been found to be more likely to succeed in influencing road safety behavior.¹
- Road safety campaigns are more likely to impact behavior when they involve a combination of education and enforcement. For instance, mass-media campaigns targeting drink driving have been found to be most effective when their messages are coupled with visible law enforcement.^{2,3}
- Campaigns that tailored their intervention to specific groups, taking into account the social and behavioral characteristics of the target audience (e.g., recognizing that younger audiences may be more receptive to social media communication than older adults), also demonstrated a positive impact on road safety behavior.^{2,3}
- Implementation of road safety communication campaigns was found to be effective when it considered aspects such as:
 - Timing: Timing of a campaign is influenced by the communication goal and the campaign theme. For example, drink driving campaigns can be effective over holidays when there is an increase in travel time and alcohol consumption.¹
 - Exposure: Evidence indicates maximum effectiveness of a campaign is achieved after 3–10 exposures, whereas the effectiveness diminishes after 10–20 exposures.⁴
 - Duration and intensity: The duration of a campaign depends on the continuity strategy. Effective campaigns may be delivered intensely over a few weeks, over a longer period of time with consistent intensity, or using a mixed approach involving alternating periods of high-intensity, repeated campaigns and periods of no advertisements.^{2,4}
- Use of fear-based messaging, which targets serious and fatal events, has produced mixed results, and its impact remains uncertain. Response to fear campaigns can also be confounded by factors such as gender and culture. However, this approach can have positive effects if accompanied by messages on coping mechanisms and preventive strategies. Additionally, fear-based advertising can be effective if it is followed by years of mild advertising.¹



Recommendations

- Successful campaign messages should consider the following:
 - Defining the problem and policy options.⁴
 - Understanding the environment or context in which the campaign will be implemented.⁴
 - Using formative research with target audiences to inform strategy design.^{1,4}
 - Defining objectives, developing messages, and determining where and when the messages will appear.⁴
 - Developing materials and pre-testing them, including a detailed evaluation of campaign objectives, messages, and materials.^{1,4}
 - Developing the distribution strategy, including designing the media plan, negotiating airtime, and determining how the campaign will be launched.⁴
 - Launching, implementing, and monitoring the campaign, and evaluating the impact of campaign message.⁴
- Communication strategies like television (TV) campaigns should be combined with other strategies (e.g., radio message, flyers, etc.) to be more effective. Effectiveness can be further enhanced by combining such campaigns with enforcement.^{1,5}



Aim of the Review

This review aimed to synthesize evidence on communication strategies and their effectiveness.



Summary of Evidence

TYPE OF INTERVENTION	LEVEL OF EFFECTIVENESS	EVIDENCE
Radio and TV (combined with enforcement)	Effective	<p>In Nevada, radio and TV campaigns combined with enforcement between 2003 and 2005 were associated with an increase in seat-belt use from 75% in 2002 to 94.8% in 2005.⁶</p> <p>In Iran, radio and TV campaigns combined with increased traffic law enforcement between 2004 to 2007 were associated with a decrease in the road traffic fatality rate from 38.2 per 100,000 in 2004 to 31.8 in 2007.⁷</p> <p>However, the two studies provide weak evidence because they used pre-post comparison study designs.</p>

TYPE OF INTERVENTION	LEVEL OF EFFECTIVENESS	EVIDENCE
Social marketing campaigns along with enforcement and related interventions	Effective	The estimated number of lives saved across several low and middle-income countries as a result of social marketing campaigns, along with enforcement and related interventions under the Bloomberg Philanthropies Initiative of Global Road Safety was calculated to be 9093 lives between 2010 and 2018. ⁸
Social media alone	Partially effective (context-dependent and penetration higher among young adults)	<p>A media campaign in Australia achieved 97% awareness among male drivers and 95% among all drivers in New South Wales.⁹</p> <p>A survey was conducted with a group of 33,368 individuals from 12 countries. Among respondents under 24 years of age, 62% reported a change in behaviors, including a reduction in speeding, distracted driving, and drink driving and increased seat-belt use. Among respondents aged 25 years and older, this figure was 58%. Facebook™ and YouTube™ were found to be effective platforms for reaching respondents 25 years and older.¹⁰</p>
Posters alone	Not effective	<p>In the Netherlands, roadside posters targeting speeding behavior were found to be initially effective in reducing the proportion of vehicles exceeding the speed limit in a 30 km/h speed limit zone. However, the effects only lasted for a week.¹¹</p> <p>Considering the design of the study (pre-post comparison study), the evidence for the effectiveness of posters alone is weak.¹¹</p>
Billboards alone	Not effective	<p>A study in the United States (U.S.) found a slight decline in driving performance in the vicinity of billboards, specifically related to drivers' lane-keeping abilities.¹²</p> <p>In a study in Australia where drivers of various levels of experience examined photographs of road scenes to identify changes to road signs and vehicle locations, participants, on average, took longer to detect changes when the road scene contained billboards.¹³</p> <p>A separate study in Sweden found that active/digital billboards drew both more ($f(1,18) = 13.3, P < 0.5$) and longer glances ($f(1,18) = 16.4, P < 0.5$) when compared with static billboards.¹⁴</p>

TYPE OF INTERVENTION	LEVEL OF EFFECTIVENESS	EVIDENCE
TV alone	Not effective	<p>Televised advertisements in Ghana focused on addressing two risk factors—speeding and drink driving—among commercial drivers. The message effectively reached its target audience and was clear and appropriate. However, respondents suggested using flyers and radio to reach drivers who did not own televisions.⁵</p> <p>Televised campaigns were found to have no effect on the use of seat-belts.¹⁵</p>
Radio alone	No evidence	NA

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