

Presentation and Supporting Paper

This supporting paper is going to be looking at a piece of health promotion from the Macmillan Cancer Support organisation called 'go sober for October'. Alcohol is a part of many people's lives with over 80% of adults consuming alcohol each week, and over 20% of them consuming a high-risk level of alcohol (NHS Digital, 2022). The aim of this supporting paper is to find out what the intended outcome for the 'go sober for October' health promotion is, what it aims to do, and who the targeted audience is. This supporting paper will also be analysing a research article to back up the 'go sober for October' health promotion.

Health promotion is to raise awareness of a particular illness or disease, to educate people and enable them to address the specific issues, with the information and resources given (NHS Highland, 2023). Macmillan cancer support (2023) suggests that there is roughly three million people diagnosed with cancer in the UK. Through research there has been evidence to show that copious amounts of alcohol intake increase the chance of an individual developing cancer. Studies show that alcohol is the third major risk factor for all cancers. By people changing their drinking habits and reducing the amount of alcohol they consume, they reduce the risk of developing cancer (Yoo et al, 2022).

Go sober for October challenge is where people give up alcohol for the whole month to raise money for different causes. There are many different organisations that are taking part in promoting this challenge. It's become an extremely popular way to promote health and change in behaviours, with the goal of harm reduction (Ternay et al, 2022), Plus, the extra benefit of raising money to help many charities.

Macmillan cancer support (MCS) aims to raise money to help people with cancer. They aim to get people that consume alcohol to sign up to the challenge and get sponsors for taking part, so more money is available to help those affected by cancer. The health promotion is to raise awareness about the effects of alcohol consumption, and the benefits of taking a break from it.

Their target audience are the over 18 that consume alcohol that maybe wanting or needing a break from it. What better way to do it than for a worthy cause (Cherry,2023). They are also targeting people that are affected by cancer. People who may have lost a loved one to cancer, or who know someone who has cancer, such as a friend or family member. Individuals that are perhaps looking for a method to help others in similar circumstances and want to show gratitude to the charity for the help that they or their loved one had received (NSPCC, 2023).

The Intended outcome of the piece of health promotion is to motivate people to give up alcohol for a month. To see for themselves the benefits of going sober. How much better they feel without it physically and mentally. Hopefully encourage people to have more alcohol-free periods. When a person experience benefits for oneself, it helps change perspective, strengthen a though, and change behaviours (Ryan et al, 2021).

Macmillan cancer support (2023) state going alcohol free for a month will enable people to think more clearly, have more energy and get a better quality of sleep. It will also aid in weight loss and give individuals a sense of achievement, by completing the challenge and raising money for charity. Which will help the organisation supply more physical, financial and emotional support for more people affected by cancer.

The research article that supports this piece of health promotion is 'Temporary abstinence during Dry January: predictors of success; impact on well-being and self-efficacy' (Visser and Nicholls, 2020). Visser and Nicholls (2020) highlight the fact that a substantial amount of alcohol has increasing risk factors for one's health. They conducted quantitative based research into the outcome of people having a month off alcohol. Quantitative research is numerical based, it can be presented on a chart or graph. It is usually gathered through surveys and closed questionnaires that have a multiple choice or yes/no answer, which enable the results to be easily analysed and understood (BBC Bitesize, 2023). Visser and Nicholls (2020) use closed questionnaires to gather their data. A questionnaire was given to participants before the 'Dry January' challenge and then after, to find out if they noticed any benefits from the abstinence of alcohol. Through their research they learned that all participants especially those that had completed the challenge, had overall improvements in their well-being and self-

efficacy, even changing individuals' self-concepts. Participants reported having a better quality of sleep, being more efficient at work with more energy, and concentration had improved. Giving up alcohol for a month also has an impact on a person physiology health, such as lower liver fat, blood glucose and cholesterol (Visser and Nicholls, 2020). Visser and Nicholls (2020) state that even though there was no data for the long-term effects of the people that took part, there is convincing evidence that shows campaigns to encourage people to become alcohol free for a month has great benefits. They could change people's views on alcohol and help people live a healthier more for filling life. Even for those that did not complete the challenge. Through the information and support provided by the health promotion, people were educated and able to make positive changes to their drinking habits. When someone is educated, they are more able to make better choices through their knowledge (Kim et al, 2018).

A large majority of people consume alcohol weekly increasing their risk of cancer and other health conditions. More people need to be educated on this so that they can make better choices to improve their overall wellbeing. This supporting paper shows that people are reaping the benefits from 'going sober' and the increasing popularity of the health promotion shows that it is working. With this knowledge there is a need for health promotions such as 'go sober for October' which are giving individuals an incentive to go abstinent from alcohol for a month. More people will be made aware of the health risks, and the benefits that they will receive from taking a break from it. Resulting in greater harm reduction in the population.

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