

“AND BY JUST GETTING IT OUT ON THE TABLE, IT JUST BECOMES MORE NORMAL WHEN IT’S TALKED ABOUT.” A QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF WORKPLACE ALCOHOL AND DRUG INTERVENTIONS

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Introduction and Aims: Risky alcohol and drug use is associated with a range of adverse outcomes. While an individual’s behavior and attitudes play a role, workplace social, structural, organisational, and environmental factors relevant to alcohol and drug use can contribute to a workplace culture of alcohol and drug use. This three-year trial involving the implementation and evaluation of a comprehensive alcohol harm reduction strategy undertaken in Australian manufacturing workplaces.

Design and Methods: A comparative study design was employed with two intervention and two comparison worksites and was implemented and assessed over a three-year period. As part of the larger study, we completed a qualitative study undertaking site observations and qualitative interviews with forty-five participants. The data were analysed using first and second cycle coding. This process allowed us to generate pre-defined categories and subcategories. A constant comparison analysis was undertaken to group together results to further explore the components of successful implementation.

Key Findings: We identified four critical components, these included 1) policy as the foundation, 2) improved communication, 3) delivery style of information and 4) knowing what to do next. Our findings indicate that successful workplace interventions need to be adaptable and responsive utilising existing workplace process to enhance uptake and ensure sustainability.

Discussions and Conclusions: While research suggests workplace interventions can be effective, they can be very difficult to implement and maintain. However, a number of key components can be used to improve implementation of AOD intervention programs in workplace settings, especially those targeting high-risk groups such as male dominated workplaces.

Implications for Practice or Policy: There is little research being done in this area and to our knowledge this is the first study of its kind in Australia.

Implications for Translational Research: This project has developed practical guidelines that will be used to translate workplace alcohol and drug interventions for Australian workplaces.

Disclosure of Interest Statement: This pilot project was funded by VicHealth, under the Creating Healthy Workplaces Program.