

CYSAR

The Centre for Youth
Substance Abuse Research



Finding Solutions
Improving Futures



Good Choices, Great Future: A theatre-based prevention program for Schoolies

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Schoolies

- Major social phenomenon
- Celebration of end of high school
- Late November/early December

a rite of passage?

a 'boozy party'?

DRINKING

- Expectation to be drunk (Smith & Rosenthal, 1997).
- Contextual and temporal factors exacerbates drinking (Johnston & White, 2004).
- Increased risk of accidents, injuries and social harms



Prevention and Intervention

- Tend to focus on creating a safer environment
 - E.g. registration, hydration zones, transport, diversionary activities
 - Well-received and reduced vandalism and nuisance behaviours (Midford et al., 2007)
- Educational programs are underutilised in the context of Schoolies
 - usually impractical when young people converge in one location from geographically diverse regions

An Exception: Choices

- Whitsunday Schoolies in North Queensland



'CHOICES'

Drinking and Risk Behaviours

90% drink

76% drink in a risky manner

15% illicit drugs

35% problem behaviours

- N = 352 school leavers
- Not surprisingly most school leavers drink
- Risky drinking
 - drank everyday at schoolies
 - Typical amount 5+
 - Consume 5+ drinks on more than 50% of the time at Schoolies
- Problems
 - Arguments, unsafe /unwanted sex, got in trouble, drink driving, or riding with someone drunk



Influence of Choices

49% saw
Choices

Table 1. Binary logistic regression models for the influence of Choices and other risk factors on risky drinking, illicit drug use and problem behaviours during Schoolies

Variables	Risky drinking (n = 337)		Illicit drug use (n = 307)		Problem behaviours (n = 296)	
	AOR	95% CI	AOR	95% CI	AOR	95% CI
Step 1						
Gender (ref: male)						
Female	1.005	0.56–1.80	0.59	0.31–1.12	1.07	0.63–1.83
Step 2						
Pre-Schoolies drinking (ref: no drinking/monthly or less)						
2–4 times a month	7.64***	4.20–13.90	1.46	0.51–4.15	1.19	0.59–2.39
Weekly or more	12.48***	4.50–34.50	4.65**	1.51–14.34	2.61*	1.07–6.35
Step 3						
Intervention (ref: no Choices)						
Choices	0.93	0.53–1.63	—	—	—	—
Drinking at Schoolies (ref: no risky drinking)						
Risky drinking	—	—	3.87*	1.10–13.60	4.30***	1.90–9.73
Illicit drug use at Schoolies (ref: no illicit drug use)						
One or more	—	—	—	—	3.78***	1.72–8.31
Step 4						
Intervention (ref: no Choices)						
Choices	—	—	0.50*	0.26–0.97	0.41**	0.25–0.70
Nagelkerke R ²	0.241		0.170		0.261	

*P < 0.05, **P < 0.01, ***P < 0.001. AOR, adjusted odds ratio; CI, confidence interval.

Choices

- No change in risky drinking
- BUT,
- Less likely to be using drugs or engage in problem behaviours

Engaging



Safer
Celebration



Recency
Effect



Reference: Quek, L.H, White, A., Low, C., Brown, J., Dalton, N., Dow, D., & Connor, J.P. (in press). Good choices, great future: A theatre-based prevention program for Schoolies. *Drug and Alcohol Review*.

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THANK YOU!

