

# Finding the keys to successful public health campaigns promoting healthy weight & lifestyle to adults: Quantitative audience testing research

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research



prevention



support



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# Mass media campaigns

- **Can be effective in changing population health behaviour (e.g. smoking cessation)**
- **However, there are variable results for mass media campaigns promoting nutrition, physical activity and healthy weight**
- **There is also limited evidence about the characteristics of effective campaigns related to obesity prevention**

# Study aim

- To assess audience reactions to existing adult-targeted public health TV ads promoting healthy weight & lifestyle
- Determine which ads have the highest levels of:
  - Perceived effectiveness
  - Message acceptance
  - Emotional impact



# Method

- **Online survey**
- **3,313 Australian adults aged 21-55 years**
- **Quotas applied for:**
  - Gender: Male / female
  - Age group: 21-29 / 30-55 years
  - BMI: Healthy weight / overweight or obese
- **Participants randomly assigned to view and rate four of eight ads related to a specified lifestyle topic: weight, diet or activity**

# Healthy weight advertisements

## **Graphic**



LiveLighter  
Toxic fat  
(Australia)

## **Animation**



Become a  
swapper  
(Australia)

## **+ testimonial**



Take life on  
(Scotland)

## **- testimonial**



Measure up  
(Australia)

## **Depicted scene**



Piece of string  
(Australia)



Full monty  
(Scotland)



Correctly  
identified  
(USA)



Why am I fat?  
(USA)

# LiveLighter: Toxic fat



# Become a swapper



# Audience response measures

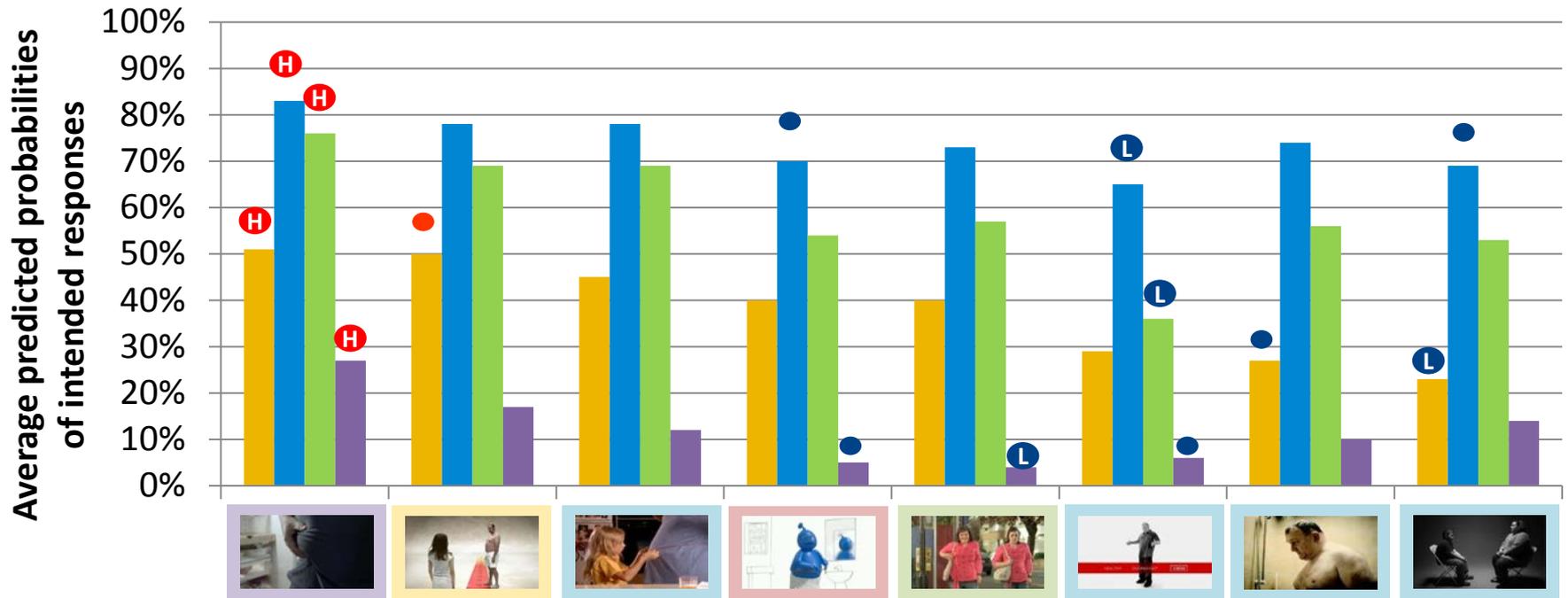
- **Personalised perceived effectiveness** (6-item scale,  $\alpha=0.92$ )
  - e.g. ‘This ad...was relevant to me / taught me something new / made me motivated to take action’
- **Argument strength** (2-item scale,  $\alpha=0.88$ )
  - This ad...was effective / made a strong argument for being a healthy weight’
- **Message acceptance** (2-item scale,  $\alpha=0.87$ )
  - ‘This ad...was easy to understand / was believable’
- **Negative emotional impact** (6-item scale,  $\alpha=0.95$ )
  - ‘While watching this ad I felt...sad / fearful / ashamed / disgusted / anxious / guilty’
- **Overall ad choice**
  - ad MOST likely to mention to someone else
  - ad MOST likely to motivate lifestyle change

# Statistical analyses

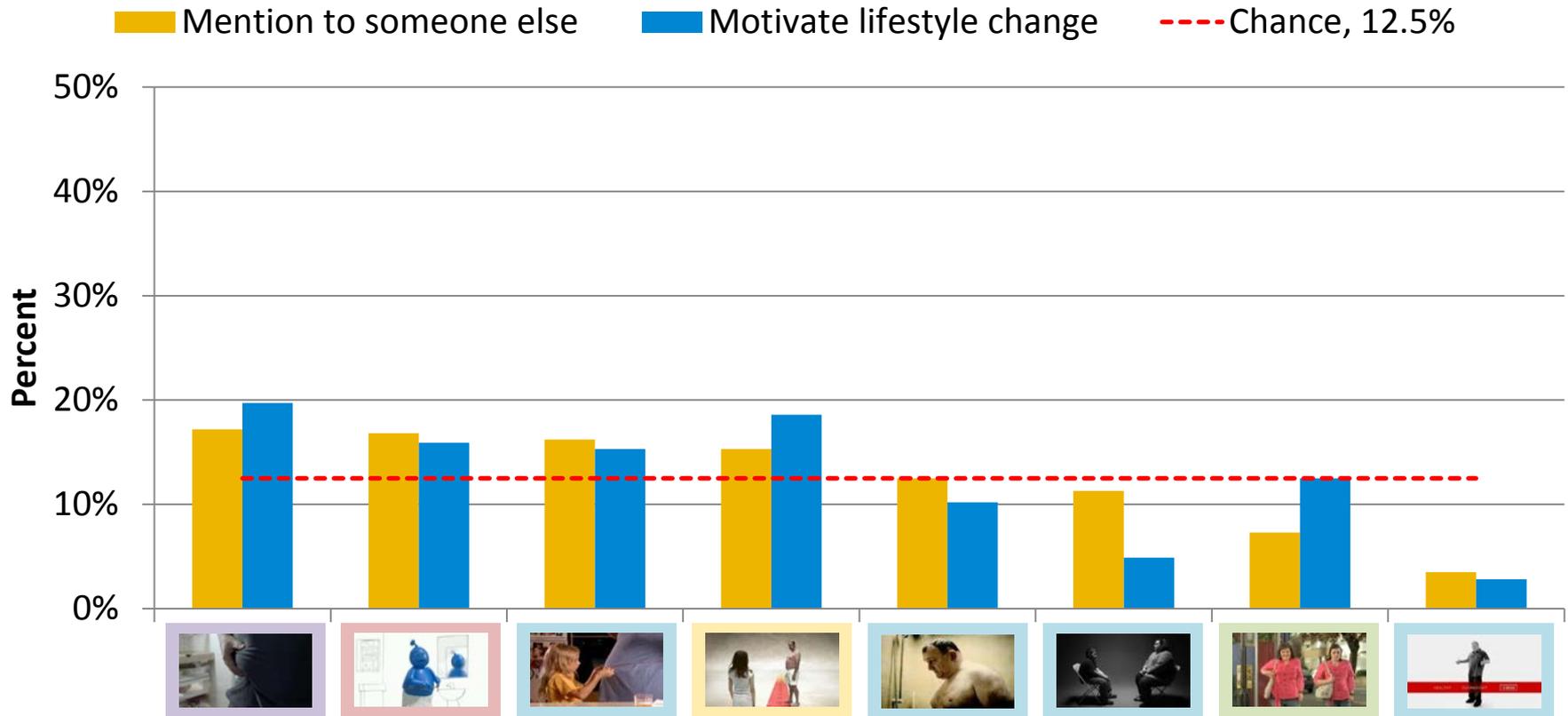
- **Multivariate logistic regression comparing outcomes across the eight ads**
  - Controlled for gender, age group, education level, parental status, weight status and whether or not participants had previously seen the ad
- **Significance testing of the highest and then lowest rated ad on each outcome compared with all other ads**
- **Multivariate logistic regression comparing ratings of each ad by weight status**

# Responses to weight ads

- Perceived effectiveness
- Message Acceptance
- Argument Strength
- Negative Emotional Impact



# Overall ad choice: weight ads



# Conclusions

- **Results provide an evidence base concerning the types of messages and executional styles that may prove most effective in future obesity prevention mass media campaigns.**
- **Ads emphasising the negative health consequences of excess weight appear most effective.**
  - These ad types were effective for both overweight/obese and healthy weight adults