Ridhwan Shams – University of Queensland

Cultural Contexts and Mass Communication: Perspectives on Anti-smoking Campaigns in Indigenous Populations

The practice of health communication has contributed to the dissemination of health messages through public education campaigns that seek to change the social climate to encourage healthy behaviours, create awareness, change attitudes, and motivate individuals to adopt recommended behaviours. Well-designed health communication activities help individuals better understand their own and their communities' needs so that they can take appropriate actions to maximise health such as quitting smoking.

Research indicates that effective health promotion and communication initiatives adopt an audience-centred perspective, such that promotion and communication activities reflect audiences' preferred formats, channels, and contexts (1). These considerations are particularly relevant for racial and ethnic populations, who may have different languages and sources of information. In these cases, public education campaigns must be conceptualised and developed by individuals with specific knowledge of the cultural characteristics, media habits, and language preferences of intended audiences.

This presentation will examine the utilisation of mass communication campaigns to spread anti-smoking messages amongst the Australian Indigenous population. The determinants of smoking behaviour in Indigenous populations will be explored. Previous attempts at using mass media campaigns on the Indigenous population will be analysed. Finally, Indigenous perspectives on improving anti-smoking campaigns in the future will be discussed.