

CONFERENCE ABSTRACT

Implementing an innovative model to empower pharmacies and their local community to increase breast cancer screening participation in Latrobe City

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Introduction: BreastScreen Victoria (BSV) provides free breast screens to eligible people, targeting women aged 50–74 to find breast cancer early, reducing morbidity and mortality. Nearly 5,000 eligible clients living in Latrobe City Local Government Area (LGA) are not up to date with the recommended biennial breast screen.

In 2019, Gippsland Primary Health Network (GPHN) partnered with BSV to increase breast screening participation in Latrobe City LGA as part of the Latrobe Health Innovation Zone Project.

Practice change: BSV partnered with community pharmacies in Latrobe City LGA to increase the capacity of pharmacy staff to raise awareness of the importance of breast screening, and encourage community to screen via an active eight-week in-store campaign.

BSV utilised findings from previous trials to develop and implement an effective, evidence-based program specific to Latrobe City.

A key element of the campaign included pharmacy staff initiating conversations with eligible customers providing BSVs key messages and screening advice.

Aim: The pharmacy-based campaign aimed to increase awareness and breast screening participation in women aged 50–74 living in Latrobe City.

Pharmacy staff received training delivered by BSV, displayed health promotion collateral, initiated conversations with customers, and monitored and evaluated campaign activity.

Targeted population/stakeholders: Women aged 50–74 were targeted, with a particular focus on low screening groups such as culturally and linguistically diverse and low SES communities.

BSV partnered with seven community pharmacies within Latrobe City where pharmacists and on-ground pharmacy staff were key to the implementation of the campaign.

Timeline:

January 2019: Pitch campaign to local pharmacies

March–April 2019: In-store training for pharmacy staff

March–June 2019: Implementation of eight-week pharmacy campaign

July 2019: Campaign conclusion and evaluation

Highlights:

- Innovative opportunity to initiate conversation about an important preventative health topic

King; Implementing an innovative model to empower pharmacies and their local community to increase breast cancer screening participation in Latrobe City

- Successful partnership between BSV, GPHN and local pharmacies
- Demonstration of a successful pharmacy-based recruitment model

Sustainability:

- Training provided builds the local capacity to continue to promote breast screening by a trusted primary health care professional
- Cost-effective strategy to increase awareness and participation in screening
- Continued pharmacy support through engagement opportunities and provision of resources

Transferability: The Latrobe City pharmacy campaign provides a successful model that could be replicated and scaled to a state-wide initiative.

Conclusions: Interim results (five of seven pharmacies) demonstrate:

- 267 conversations initiated between pharmacy staff and the community
- 96.5% of pharmacists and pharmacy staff found the campaign to be effective in raising awareness of breast screening
- 89.6% of pharmacists and pharmacy staff intended to continue to promote breast screening with customers

Full findings will be available in July 2019.

Discussion:

- Demonstrated successful partnership between a cancer screening service, PHN and pharmacies
- Pharmacies are receptive and eager to deliver health promotion activities, if a successful model is provided

Lessons learned:

- Community pharmacies are an effective, yet underutilised resource to promote breast screening
- Campaigns can be easily implemented and localised, requiring minimal resources and high engagement impact
- Opportunity exists for BSV to partner with other PHNs to increase breast screening participation rates across Victoria