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Post-Evaluation of Stigma and Opioid Harm Reduction Advertising Campaign (ACET)

Executive Summary

Prepared for Health Canada

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brad Griffin", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Brad Griffin
President
Ipsos Public Affairs



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This public opinion research report presents the methodology of the Pre- and Post-Evaluation of Stigma and Opioid Harm Reduction Advertising Campaign online surveys conducted by Ipsos Public Affairs on behalf of Health Canada. The pre-campaign survey was conducted with a sample of n=2319 Canadians ages 18+ between July 27th and August 17th, 2022. The first of two post-campaign surveys was conducted with a sample of n=2,327 Canadians ages 18+ between April 17th and 30th, 2023. The second post-campaign survey was conducted with a sample of n=2335 Canadians ages 18+ between January 9th and 23rd, 2024.

Cette publication est aussi disponible en français sous le titre : *Évaluation post-campagne de la campagne publicitaire sur la réduction de la stigmatisation et des méfaits liés aux opioïdes (OECP)*

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Executive Summary

1. Background

1.1 Summary Statement

The growing number of opioid-related deaths and other harms is a national public health crisis that has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. There was a total of 36,442 apparent opioid toxicity deaths in Canada between January 2016 and December 2022. A total of 7,328 apparent opioid toxicity deaths occurred in 2022. This is an average of 20 deaths per day. In 2019, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the average number of deaths per day was 10, which increased to a peak of 22 in 2021. In 2022, most (87%) of all accidental apparent opioid toxicity deaths in Canada occurred in British Columbia, Alberta, and Ontario. Elevated mortality rates have also been observed in other areas with smaller population sizes, including Saskatchewan and Yukon.

The opioid crisis is complex, and it affects all communities, all age groups, and all socioeconomic groups. However, men working in physically demanding jobs are disproportionately impacted by substance use related harms, as young to middle-aged men account for approximately three-quarters of apparent opioid-related deaths. Furthermore, 30% to 50% of those employed worked in trades at the time of their death. There is an urgent need to address the overrepresentation of this group in the overdose crisis.

In an effort to target and create messaging that resonates with men in physically demanding jobs, a creative concept with a visual identity has been developed as part of Health Canada's multi-year marketing campaign to address the growing opioid overdose crisis. The campaign aims to:

- Provide men in physically demanding professions with tools and resources to learn more and access supports for substance use and addiction.
- Provide resources for those who want to support men in physically demanding professions who may be struggling with substance use and addiction.
- Reduce the stigma associated with addiction and help-seeking.

The overdose crisis continues to be a Government of Canada priority, having been included in the Fall Economic Update 2020 and the addendum to the 2021 Minister of Health's mandate letter. Furthermore, Budget 2023 proposes funding for a renewed Canadian Drugs and Substances Strategy (CDSS) that supports community-based programming; authorizations for supervised consumption sites and drug checking services; increasing access to safer supply; and evaluating innovative approaches to address the overdose crisis. As part of that commitment, and building on previous campaign success, the Ease the Burden campaign will be re-launched and will focus on reducing stigma around asking for help and provide resources for those looking for help or wanting to help others.

The Government's Policy on Communications and Federal Identity requires the evaluation of advertising campaigns exceeding \$1 million in media buy using the Advertising Campaign Evaluation Tool (ACET). The ACET was created in 2002 following a Cabinet directive identifying the need for a standard advertising evaluation approach across departments. The main objectives were to bring rigor and consistency to ad campaign evaluation and to develop norms on metrics against which campaigns could be evaluated.



Recent changes to reporting now require both pre- and post-campaign ACET surveys that use an online panel and similar questions.

Three separate online surveys were conducted to assess the impact of the campaign. The pre-campaign survey was conducted between July 27th and August 17th, 2022. The first of two post-campaign surveys was conducted between April 17th and 30th, 2023. The second post-campaign survey was conducted between January 9th and 23rd, 2024. All three surveys were conducted in English and French.

2. Purpose of the Research

2.1 Research Objective

The objectives of the research are as follows:

- Determine if people have seen the advertisements associated with the campaign
- Determine where the ads have been seen
- Measure recall of specific elements of the campaign
- Measure increased knowledge
- Identify attitudinal and behavioural changes as a result of the advertising campaign

The target audience of the research was as follows:

- General Canadian population 18 years of age or older
- Males aged 20 to 59 who work in physically demanding professions e.g.:
 - Construction
 - Transportation and warehousing
 - Manufacturing
 - Trades, transport, and equipment operators

2.2 Online Sample

This project involved three (3) waves of surveying – a pre-campaign survey and two post-campaign surveys. All three surveys were executed online using a non-probability online panel. This is the standard approach for all Government of Canada advertising evaluation surveys. The initial baseline survey was conducted before the campaign launched and the two recall surveys were conducted following the completion of the campaign.

Respondents for the survey samples were drawn from a trusted partner panel vendor, Canadian Viewpoint Inc. The pre-campaign survey was conducted with a sample of n=2,319 Canadians ages 18+. The first post-campaign survey was conducted with a sample of n=2,327 Canadians ages 18+, and the second post-campaign survey was conducted with a sample of n=2,335 Canadians ages 18+. Each phase included around n=2,000 members of the general population, including oversamples of males aged 20 to 59 who work in physically



demanding professions, so that the total sample size for this target group is n=500. Interviews were conducted in English and French, with respondents being able to complete the survey in either language of their choice.

For the pre-campaign survey, a pre-test was conducted on July 27th, with n=20 completes (n=11 English / n=9 French), to confirm survey length before fully deploying the questionnaire. No issues with the survey or collected data were flagged. The survey was fully launched and ran between July 27th and August 17th, 2022.

For the first post-campaign survey, a pre-test was conducted on April 17th, 2023, with n=155 completes (n=133 English / n=22 French). No issues were flagged. The survey was fully launched and ran between April 18th and 30th, 2023.

For the second post-campaign survey, a pre-test was conducted on January 9th, 2024, with n=38 completes (n=30 English / n=8 French). A select few completes were disqualified from the sample due to evidence of inaccurate response patterns, but otherwise no issues were flagged. The survey was fully launched and ran between January 11th and 23rd, 2024.

For all three surveys, quotas were set to ensure representation by region, age, and gender, according to the latest Census information. Sampling targets were obtained through natural fallout. An oversample of males aged 20 to 59 who work in physically demanding professions was conducted per survey, n=500 in the pre-survey, n=502 in the first post-survey, and n=501 in the second post-survey. The unweighted oversample counts are shown below.

Target audience	Pre-campaign	Post-campaign I	Post-campaign II
Males aged 20 to 59 who work in physically demanding professions	500 (421 wtd)	502 (414 wtd)	501 (414 wtd)

The sampling methodology utilized email invitations and router technology to invite participants. Each participant received a unique URL link. This link could only be used once, with respondents being allowed to pause during completion and return to complete. On average, the pre-campaign survey was approximately 3 minutes in length (LOI 2:58 min); the first the post-campaign ACET was approximately 6 minutes in length (LOI: 6:13 min); and the second post-campaign ACET survey was approximately 7 minutes in length (LOI: 6.99 min).