

THE METH PROJECT

New Research Cites Meth Project Ads as Effective

Study Published in Journal of Marketing Research Finds Meth Project's Approach "Significantly Reduced Future Drug Use"

PALO ALTO, Calif.—March 7, 2012—A new study published in the *Journal of Marketing Research* has cited the Meth Project's advertising as effective in deterring substance abuse.

The new study, by researchers at the W. P. Carey School of Business at Arizona State University, compared different types of advertisements—ads that used only fear tactics to convey their message, ads like the Meth Project's that added an additional element on top of the fear that would disgust target audiences, and ads that were emotionally neutral.

The researchers tested the effectiveness of several advertisements—including the Meth Project's—with a group of college students and found that ads that relied on fear alone to convey their message did not lead to immediate changes in attitudes or behavior. However, according to the study, the Meth Project ads and others that incorporated an element of "disgust," such as rotting teeth, skin sores or infections, did compel viewers to "undertake distancing behaviors," such as deciding not to use illegal drugs.

The researchers presented students with a series of three Meth prevention ads. Each advertisement used identical copy from one of the Meth Project's ads to convey a drug-prevention message. However, the images in each ad were different, and were designed to evoke either fear and disgust, fear only, or neutral emotions. An actual Meth Project campaign ad depicting a teen with open sores on his face represented the fear and disgust test; the fear-only image was a coffin; and the neutral image showed two teens sitting side by side. The fear and disgust image using the Meth Project's ad was the only one to have a significant impact on the participants' intentions to use illegal drugs in the future.

"Notably, the disgust and fear appeal condition in this study used an actual advertisement from the Montana Meth Project, a nationally recognized, award-winning program that uses high-impact advertising to reduce methamphetamine use . . . It was only the disgust-inducing fear appeal [the Meth Project ad] that significantly reduced future drug use, making it more effective in terms of persuasion and compliance," the report concluded.

The new study, "How Disgust Enhances the Effectiveness of Fear Appeals," by Andrea C. Morales, Eugenia C. Wu, and Gavan J. Fitzsimons, was published in the *Journal of Marketing Research*. The journal, which is published by the American Marketing Association, is a bi-monthly peer-reviewed journal that focuses on the subject of marketing research, from its philosophy, concepts, and theories to its methods, techniques, and applications.

The Meth Project's prevention campaigns have been developed in consultation with top experts in research, prevention, treatment, advertising, and digital media, including experts from the National Institute on Drug Abuse, the Department of Justice, the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Department of Health and Human Services, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, RAND Corporation, UCLA, University of Illinois, and the Partnership for a Drug-Free America. In November 2011, the Meth Project launched a new digital campaign. Central to the campaign is MethProject.org—a definitive source of information about Meth—supported by new television, radio,

print, online, mobile, and social media. The new campaign is the culmination of six years of development and quantitative and qualitative research conducted with more than 50,000 teens and young adults, including 60 national and statewide surveys, and 112 focus groups. For more information visit www.MethProject.org.

Founded by businessman Thomas M. Siebel as a private-sector response to a critical public health issue, the Meth Project is a research-based prevention campaign that has been cited by the White House as a model for the nation. Named the 3rd most effective philanthropy in the world by *Barron's* in its latest global ranking, the Meth Project has been credited with significant declines in teen Meth use in several states. Since the Project's launch, teen Meth use has declined 65% in Arizona, 63% in Montana, and 50% in Idaho.

About the Meth Project

The Meth Project is a national non-profit organization headquartered in Palo Alto, California, aimed at significantly reducing Meth use through public service messaging, public policy, and community outreach. Central to its integrated campaign is MethProject.org—a definitive source for information about Meth for teens. The Montana Meth Project, Arizona Meth Project, Idaho Meth Project, Illinois Meth Project, Wyoming Meth Project, Colorado Meth Project, Hawaii Meth Project, Georgia Meth Project, and other state affiliates implement the Meth Project prevention programs in their respective states. The Meth Project is funded by a grant from the Thomas and Stacey Siebel Foundation. For more information, visit www.Foundation.MethProject.org.

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