

## **PARALLEL SESSION 3C**

### **Drugs, alcohol and driving**

#### **Drugs, driving and nightlife**

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Travel to and from nightlife venues involves cars. For some young people the car itself is effectively the chosen nightlife venue. A range of indicators demonstrates that significant numbers of young people drive after taking illicit drugs and subsequently, concern about drug driving is increasing. Clearly interventions are needed to reduce the extent of drug driving. Critical to the development of effective interventions is the need to know the social context, circumstances and factors associated with why people 'drive on drugs'. This presentation will examine drug driving and road safety research. A number of important questions will be examined. Should the issue be constructed as a drug problem or a road safety problem? What can be learnt from road safety interventions? Should drug driving be considered along side drink driving? How can the unequivocal message 'don't drive on drugs' be delivered credibly and distinguished from the 'just say no' message? Examples of drug driving and road safety interventions will be provided, including recent work by HIT. Recommendations will also be made about implementing mass media campaigns and other interventions to prevent drug driving.

# Drugs, driving and nightlife

Andrew Bennett,  
HIT, UK



## This presentation

- Introducing HIT
- Drug driving: what we know
- Important issues
- Conclusion



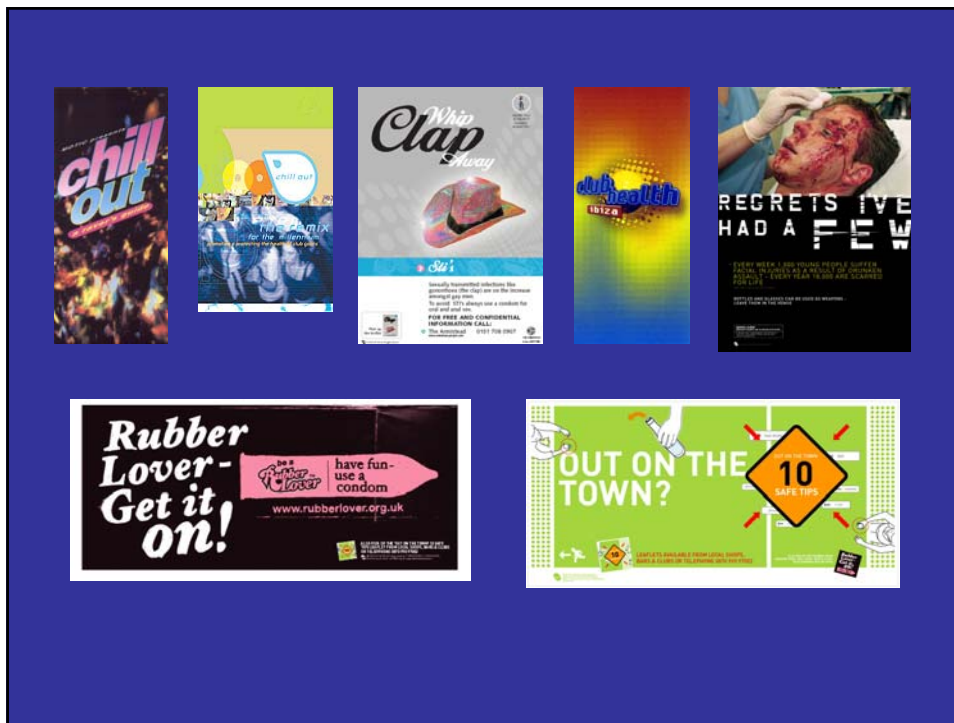
# HIT



## What we do

- Deliver interventions on drugs, community safety & other public health concerns
- Publications, campaigns, training, consultation and research & conferences





## Social marketing techniques

Social marketing involves using principles and methods derived from marketing to understand and change the behaviour of individuals and groups



## Concepts

- Consumer orientation
- Market segmentation
- Consumer focused research
- Marketing mix - product, price, place and promotion



## Drug driving: what we know



## Extent of the problem

- 18% of road crash victims were known to have been driving with drugs in their system in 1999, compared to 3% in 1989
- Up to 11% of drivers aged 17 - 39 in Scotland; 6% in previous 12 months (2006)
- 85% of clubbers had ever driven after recent drug taking in Scotland (2002)
- Cannabis most common drug

\* See Scottish Executive [www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications) - Illicit drugs and driving

## Circumstances

- After taking drugs in cars - the car is the nightlife venue!
- After taking drugs at a friends house or party
- Driving home from clubs
- Positive incentives and limited deterrents



## Perceptions

- “Drugs don’t affect my ability to drive”
- “Drink driving is a much bigger problem”
- “Drugs can’t be detected”
- “I won’t get caught”
- “Not illegal” - or uncertainty about penalties



## Behavioural change theories

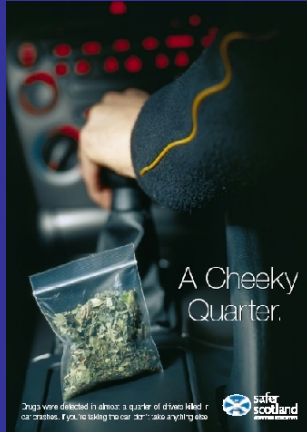
### When will individuals take action?

- perceive to be susceptible to a problem
- potentially serious consequences
- a course of action is available that will reduce their susceptibility
- benefits of action outweigh the costs/barriers

Health Belief Model



## Road Safety Scotland, 2005



- public perception that there was no way of catching drug-drivers
- tackle the perception held by many drug-drivers that drugs do not affect their driving

## Important issues



## What can we learn from road safety campaigns targeted at young people?

- Similar sensation seeking characteristics
- Messages often dismissed as irrelevant or insulting - "*High speed, low IQ*". "*Has your car got a nut loose at the wheel?*" \*
- Fear arousal techniques

\* [http://www.roadsafety.qld.gov.au/qt/LTASinfo.nsf/Index/rs\\_campaigns\\_speeding](http://www.roadsafety.qld.gov.au/qt/LTASinfo.nsf/Index/rs_campaigns_speeding)

## Worse case scenario

"Shoppers in Birkenhead will witness the devastation of a car crash at first hand on Saturday when Wirral Council stages an accident reconstruction"



<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/merseyside/4702498.stm>

## Campaign developed by HIT



Self efficacy rather than 'telling off'.  
Looks credible – not from authority?

Lad culture targeted at young males –  
mimic mainstream advertising





## Should drug driving be distinguished from drink driving?

- Many drug drivers are *not* drink drivers
- But if drivers recognised the risks as similar they may adopt similar behaviours across drugs *and* drink
- However, some are ... and some also commit other driving offences
- Should one type of drug be distinguished from another?



## How can we ensure the message is credible?

- Focus on road safety issues, *not* drug prevention
- Need to distance the 'don't drive on drugs' message from 'just say no' message
- Focus on realistic consequences and penalties



## London, 2004



Work in progress:  
Cheshire, 2006/07



## Challenge perceptions

- There is a *real* possibility of being caught - Field Impairment Tests; Police priority
- *Persuasive* deterrents - lose license; increase in insurance cost; £5000 fine; 6-month prison sentence
- Drugs *do* affect driving



## Conclusion



## So, where are we now?

- Some recent campaigns
- Limited evidence of effectiveness
- Emerging understanding of behaviour, attitudes & beliefs
- Realistic messages essential - recognise positive incentives; focus of appropriate consequences and increase perception of deterrents



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