

# HEALTH PROMOTION AND THE COMPONENTS OF SOCIAL MARKETING IN THE FUNCTION OF EARLY DIAGNOSIS OF BREAST CANCER

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**Abstract:** Implementation of social marketing within healthcare is to preserve and improve health and early diagnosis of disease. The aims of this work are the analysis of two campaigns for breast cancer prevention in Serbia and review of key experiences from them. All advantages and disadvantages of two campaigns, ran by AVON and the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Serbia from 2014 to 2020, are taken into consideration, as well as the ways for further research within social marketing focused on primary prevention and early diagnosis of breast cancer. The advantages of the previously mentioned campaigns are: target groups stratification according their characteristics and traits and determination of specific strategies of social marketing for every stratum (e.g. urban or rural environment), as well as targeting not only specific target group, women, but the support group as well (family, relatives, friends). The disadvantages of the campaigns are: vague activities, non-sustainable continuity of social marketing activities, insufficient dedication to innovation of the campaigns to upcoming generations.

**Key words:** social marketing, health promotion, breast cancer

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## INTRODUCTION

Various studies have shown that knowledge and women's awareness on breast cancer as well as risk factors are at low level in low and lower-middle income countries [1,2,3]. Social marketing is commonly used in public health interventions to promote cancer screening and early diagnosis, because it can rapidly deliver targeted public health messages and interventions to large numbers of people. The main goal of the campaigns is the diagnosis of breast cancer at the early stages within a larger percentage of women than it is the case nowadays and thus provide: the reduction of breast cancer mortality rate in the Republic of Serbia, the reduction of invalidity and the improvement of breast cancer patient's quality of life. The evidence indicates that public health social marketing campaigns conducted through mainstream media can have a direct and positive effect on behaviour [4,5], but the adoption of a comprehensive approach, such as concurrent availability of required services and products, availability of community-based programmes, and policies that support behaviour change, contributes to positive outcomes [4].

Social marketing is a very influential tool used to address and modify human behaviour and social change [6], and represents adjustments of marketing technology for analysis, planning, design, implementation and technique control, leading to personal and public wellbeing, sophisticated model for willing changes in behaviour within certain target groups (chosen, priorities) and finally, it includes the characteristics of marketing mix (analysis, product-idea planning, price, distribution, promotion, evaluation). In all forms of social marketing, the most important goal is to find the successful approach to target population. All needs of target population and ways to satisfy their needs and reaction to applied strategy are taken into consideration in planning and implementation of social marketing strategies. The right reaction to the message related to health depends on the knowledge, experience, attitudes and earlier practice of the user. The aims of this paper are to analyze the content of two breast cancer campaigns in Serbia and to review key experiences from them.

## METHODS

Case study review is related to the campaigns run by AVON and the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Serbia with the aim of raising awareness and knowledge of women about the importance of early breast cancer screening. The campaigns were launched in 2014, and so far, they have lasted at different intensity levels. During that period of time, various educational workshops, promotional activities and preventive clinical examinations for early diagnosis of breast cancer in women have been done. Data sources are:

AVON action plans and action plans realization reports, available reports of the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Serbia on implementation of early diagnosis of breast cancer from 2014 to 2020, educational material coming from participants involved in early diagnosis of breast cancer detection programme organized by the Institute of Public Health of Serbia “Dr Milan Jovanovic Batut”. Information about the objective of the campaign and the tactics used was extracted from each case study.

## RESULTS

Two campaigns are analyzed using the following parameters: objectives, tactics and experiences (Table 1.).

Table 1. Summary of two campaigns of social marketing conducted by AVON and the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Serbia [9,10,11,12,13]

Organisation	Objectives	Tactics	Notes
AVON	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- information, women’s education and raising awareness on breast cancer</li> <li>-prevention and breast cancer diagnosis support</li> <li>-post operational patients’ support</li> <li>-procurement of equipment for early diagnosis of breast cancer</li> <li>- scientific research on breast cancer treatment support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Facebook application for raising money for the breast cancer fight foundation</li> <li>-it allows messages and notes exchange with a message “I want this life by your side”, and for every “share” the company donates one dinar to local projects for the fight against breast cancer</li> <li>- organization of workshops for women and family members in rural environments on the importance of preventive screening for the fight against breast cancer</li> <li>- organization of walks in Belgrade (every October)</li> <li>- donation of preventive and clinical examinations</li> <li>-donation of equipment (movable digital mammograph, device for stereotaxic vacuum assisted biopsy)</li> <li>-providing of wigs, bras and psychosocial support to women after the operation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-The modification service strategy is used in the Republic of Serbia, based on “spoken word”, the promotion based on leaflets, brochures-undifferentiated marketing strategy</li> <li>-Pioneers in Serbia in launching this campaign</li> <li>-This programme will continue for years</li> <li>-Focused on post operational care of women with diagnosed cancer or after other related medical treatment</li> <li>-There are no relevant data about the process and results’ evaluation of campaign</li> </ul>
the Ministry of Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-capacity building for the programme of secondary breast cancer prevention management</li> <li>- improvement of knowledge and skills of healthcare professionals for early diagnosis of breast cancer</li> <li>- social marketing</li> <li>-social mobilization</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-improving resources in health: education of employees, procurement of equipment, developed methodology</li> <li>-initiation of matching and engaging different partners in a community for reaching the mutual goal under the motto “Serbia against cancer!”</li> <li>-available mammography exams after working hours of employees with invitation letter and without waiting, easy schedule</li> <li>- design of loud and clear messages :“Tell everyone you love ! Regular clinical exam is the best protection”, “Who can help you to avoid cancer? You! Respond to your doctor’s call.”</li> <li>-engagement of famous and influential people from local communities ( famous actresses, local leaders from the Roma community)</li> <li>-distribution of promotional materials in places frequently attended by women and in public places</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-The differentiated marketing strategy is used, based on “spoken word”, direct mail promotion</li> <li>-a major goal of the campaign is to focus on encouraging women to seek breast screening exams (mammographs) in accordance to the National Guidelines;</li> <li>-Direct communication “one-on-one” is used,communication with women</li> <li>-Personal tracking of clinical exams is established and treatment for every woman free of charge</li> <li>-Communication mode of different cultural bases with the Roma women from rural communities is established</li> <li>- There are no relevant data about the evaluation of the process and the results of the campaign</li> <li>-There is no content nor are there the techniques suitable for younger generations</li> </ul>

Both campaigns delivered clear actionable health messages. The techniques for the change of behaviour such as providing social support and putting an emphasis on breast cancer consequences in order to engage the users, have been used. But it is not known whether the system for tracking the campaigns' success, their visibility and the problems in the user's behaviour, is developed or not.

#### DISCUSSION

It is very important to find an effective, affordable, cost-effective, culturally-acceptable and sustainable way for early diagnosing of breast cancer. *Breast cancer campaigns must offer evidence-based information that does not fuel fear or offer empty promises in the attempt to sell "pink" or other products. Both campaigns explained to the users that the problem exists, that there is practical life solution and possibilities for its implementation, as well as clear, simple and feasible guidelines. Also, the target group has been exposed to strategies which allow putting themselves in a favourable future position with more satisfaction, health, security and attraction.* The continuing visible support of relevant institutions and community, the continual education of healthcare professionals for early diagnosing of breast cancer and network support development is not emphasized enough. But the most important drawbacks of the campaigns are the lack of figuring out some new communicational messages as well as making the existing ones stronger, which could offer feedback to people on the success of their efforts and the required further steps, and the lack of evaluation. Also, neither the campaigns nor the programme provided the education about a limited set of risk factors and action can be taken in ways that may reduce risk for breast cancer for many women: avoiding unnecessary medical radiation throughout life, avoiding the use of some forms of postmenopausal hormone therapy, avoiding smoking, limiting alcohol consumption, increasing physical activity, and minimizing weight gain. Breast cancer awareness program should be directed to include risk reduction strategies, as well as the public through media campaigns, family doctors and general practitioners, obstetrics and gynecology specialist and nurses [14]. Also, it should be promoted to all adult age groups, which will allow a cross-exposure among social and family networks [14], as well as to pupils in secondary school through inclusion of breast cancer prevention strategies into the regular academic curriculum [15]. The very important key for promoting awareness is to include women in the planning process in order to achieve a more culturally specific and linguistic approach [6].

In the campaign run by AVON, OutReach intervention was mostly used (focused on individual women and the community networks and promoting breast cancer screening), and in the campaign run by the Ministry of Health all three interventions were used: Out Reach, InReach (improvement of health care services, enabling education of health workers and procurement of new equipment) and Access (health care services availability and accessibility) (16). But, these didn't include physicians in private health sector. For future breast cancer awareness and secondary prevention programs it is very important to identify and explore the barriers that inhibit women from seeking timely screening, such as psycho-logical, socio-cultural and structural [17].

#### CONCLUSIONS

Health promotion through community development is a complex process. It is necessary to take into account that individuals are not passive recipients of public health interventions and highlight the issues of social determinants of health. Priority areas for improvement in breast cancer awareness programs are: to sustain long-term breast cancer prevention practices among target groups including pupils in secondary schools, concerned organizations should establish an assessment or an evaluation system that should be integrated in the program in order to reinforce engagement and repeating education interventions.

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