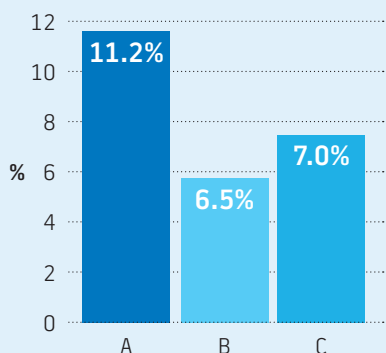




- 3 month trial.



- The impact of version A, B and C on registrations.



- Those who took part in the campaign reduced energy consumption by an average of 606kj per day.¹⁸



- Asking people for a small commitment and clicking on the green box had a big (and surprising) impact in getting people to follow through on the challenge.

4. Testing the most effective messaging to increase campaign sign-up: VicHealth’s H30 Challenge trial

Australians are big consumers of sugar-sweetened beverages. In 2006, Australia was amongst the top ten countries for per capita consumption of soft drinks¹⁹. The H30 Challenge was devised to help establish healthier habits, encouraging people to drink water instead of soft drinks, energy drinks, fruit drinks, sports drinks, ready-to-drink iced tea, flavoured water or cordial.

When the challenge was designed, there were hundreds of decisions made about how the website should be set out. Many of these almost certainly affected how people interacted with it. Even small changes in the ordering and presentation of information can have a large impact on people’s behaviour.

Victorians can sign up to the H30 Challenge through the website, and in January to March 2015 we ran a simple RCT to make it as appealing as possible for people to sign up to the Challenge via the website. Digital platforms give us a brilliant opportunity to easily trial small variations in pages to find what’s most effective, as randomisation is simple and data is automatically captured. We tested three versions of the H30 homepage, looking at which led to the greatest number of sign-ups completed for the H30 Challenge.

Version A: split the registration into two stages, with no details initially requested, and the full set required once visitors had clicked ‘Sign up now’.

Version B: used a homepage asking for key contact information.

Version C: used the same homepage as Version B, asking for key contact information and subsequently asking for additional information captured in the full sign-up page used for Version A.

¹⁸ H30 Challenge data 2014–2015.

¹⁹ Australian Bureau of Statistics, Australian Health Survey. Consumption of Sweetened Beverages <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/4364.0.55.007main+features7102011-12> (retrieved 21 March 2016).

There was a series of rotating motivational messages present on all of the homepages.

During the trial there were over 60,318 visits to the website. Version A was markedly more effective, with around 11 per cent of visitors signing up for the Challenge, compared to Versions B and C at around 7 per cent. We initially expected that having a single simple version, which asked fewer questions, would be more effective. Indeed, asking fewer questions is a maxim that is often used by market researchers and has been found in other A/B tests (Schrage 2012).

Why was there such a stark difference in sign-up rates for such similar pages? Although we can't be sure, we believe that it was due to perceived friction and wanting to finish what you start. Having a very low-cost initial commitment to signing up, that required no details, led to a large number of people clicking to sign up initially. If you ask for people's details straight away before they have committed, they may be less likely to engage at all.

This might initially sound like a small difference, but to put this in perspective, if Version A had been used for the whole trial period, more than 1000 extra Victorians would have signed up for the H3O Challenge. Importantly, follow-up survey data indicated that those who signed up through Version A performed very similarly at the Challenge to those who signed up through B and C. This is an important check as it suggests that lowering the perceived barrier to entry did not just cause low-motivation individuals to sign up, who would not take the Challenge seriously. These lessons have been applied to future VicHealth campaigns so they will continue to improve the user experience and help Victorians reach their goals to be healthier.





- 12 week trial.



- Response rate was greater when people were told their response contributed to collective understanding of health of their community, than when given a sense of urgency.



- Digital trials were a cost effective way to provide insights. There were virtually no additional costs to running this trial.



- Even minute details matter. Language and wording of text messages and letters make a big difference as to whether or not someone participates in a survey.

5. Tailored messaging to increase survey participation: VicHealth Indicators Survey

The VicHealth Indicators Survey is a Victorian community wellbeing survey. The survey is based on core questions related to VicHealth's Action Agenda. It complements other Victorian population health surveys, such as the Victorian Government's Victorian Population Health Survey, and focuses on factors that influence health, which are critical to informing decisions about public health action.

First conducted in 2007, this iteration of the survey collects a wide range of information from approximately 23,000 people and covers topics such as mental wellbeing, alcohol, healthy eating, physical activity, community safety, and gender equity. The 2015 survey contains core questions specially designed to track progress towards VicHealth's 10-year targets.

The survey is designed to support the development and use of local community wellbeing indicators as a tool for informed, engaged and integrated community planning and policymaking, to improve health outcomes and reduce health inequalities. This information is invaluable for local governments developing Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plans as required by Victorian legislation. Indicator data can provide health planners and social planners with tools to monitor and identify emerging trends and issues affecting health and potential areas for action.

A challenge for population surveys is ensuring adequate numbers of people participate, so that the survey respondents adequately represent the population of interest – in this instance, Victorian residents. This telephone survey used both landline and mobile phones, in order to maximise participation.