

Promoting healthy behaviour: The effect of message framing and the presentation of health vs. social consequences on health risk perception

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Cite as:

Unger Franziska, Steul-Fischer Martina (2020), Promoting healthy behaviour: The effect of message framing and the presentation of health vs. social consequences on health risk perception. *Proceedings of the European Marketing Academy*, 49th, (63761)

Paper from the 49th Annual EMAC Conference, Budapest, May 26-29, 2020.



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Abstract

Health risk perceptions influence consumers' everyday health behaviour. Publishers of health communication need to know about effective ways to increase health risk perception to induce stronger health behaviour intentions among recipients. We investigate in our experimental study the impact of message framing (negative vs. positive) and the presentation of health vs. social consequences in health prevention campaigns. The results reveal that negative message frames and the presentation of health consequences increase health risk perception more strongly than positive message frames and the presentation of social consequences. This effect is mediated by a stronger perceived severity for health (vs. social) consequences. Women perceive health (vs. social) consequences more likely and closer in time than men. Our findings show the theoretical and managerial importance of increasing health risk perception through health communication in order to promote healthy behaviour intentions.

Keywords: *health risk perception; health communication; health behaviour*

Track: Consumer Behaviour