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# Social Marketing Approach to a Successful Oral Cancer Case-Finding Pilot

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## **Abstract**

The incidence of oral cancer is increasing. Cases often present too late for treatment to be successful due to lack of awareness of the disease and reluctance to access services. The objective of this project was to implement a social marketing oral cancer pilot case-finding service for an at-risk population. The project used specific awareness-raising techniques in a defined catchment population to engage with those at risk from oral cancer and encourage them to seek early case-finding and diagnosis or elimination from follow-up, in a uniquely designed case-finding/referral intervention based on social marketing techniques. Of those who went on to make a case-finding appointment following an initial risk assessment, 96% kept their appointment and 10% were referred to specialist services. The system developed proved that it is possible to engage with a hard-to-reach target population at risk from a serious disease and draw significant numbers into case-finding/health service contact. This intervention illustrates the value of complex target-population tracking systems; shows the application of social marketing techniques in drawing in a target audience hard-to-reach; and how much social marketing is about the product or service rather than just the communication strategy.