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UCI EMIG Students Stress the Deadly Consequences of Drinking to Santa Ana Seniors



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Figure 1. A high school student volunteers as a mock victim involved in a traffic fatality.



Figure 2. A high school student volunteer is placed on a gurney while Santa Ana Firefighters put on a neck brace.

On Thursday, May 13, 2010, University of California Irvine's (UCI) Emergency Medicine Interest Group (EMIG) held its local community outreach event, "Not Just Another Drink," at Santa Ana Valley High School. "Not Just Another Drink" is a medical student-run DUI awareness program that combines aspects of educational programs, including "Every 15 Minutes," and Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) DUI awareness campaigns. The EMIG medical students created this program in 2008 with the help of the UCI Medical Center Emergency Departmental (ED) staff and the Santa Ana Fire and Police Departments. Together, UCI and its affiliates have worked hard to educate over 900 high school seniors in the Santa Ana and Orange County community in just two short years.

This year, UCI EMIG presented "Not Just Another Drink" before 400 high school students one week prior to their high school prom. Our intention was to deliver a message that would ring loud and clear on prom night, especially if students were considering drinking and driving or getting into the car of a friend who had been drinking.

The program began with a live scene depicting the immediate aftermath of a high-speed motor vehicle collision, and the students watched as paramedics, firefighters and police officers approached the scene as if it were a real critical trauma incident. The scene was narrated

by the Santa Ana Fire Department captain, which helped the students better understand what they were observing. The six students who played mock victims wore stage make-up to reflect their extensive, and for some, life-threatening injuries. The mock victims included one fatality (Figure 1), two critically (Figure 2) and two moderately injured victims, and an unharmed drunk driver. The high school seniors watched silently as the Santa Ana Fire Department performed a vehicle extrication; at the same time, the Santa Ana Police Department conducted a live field sobriety test on the driver, resulting in his arrest for DUI. The mock accident was immediately followed by a presentation by Bharath Chakravarthy, MD, from the UCI Medical Center Emergency Department. In his talk, he spoke of the dangers of drinking and driving, presented real-life scenarios and photographs of DUI victims treated in the ED.

The students then broke out into small discussion groups, led by UCI medical students, to discuss their thoughts, using the MADD curriculum. The students had an opportunity to explore their feelings and share their reactions to what they had just witnessed. Additionally, a number of police officers participated in the small-group sessions and shared their experiences with the tragedies of drunk driving.

We received an extraordinarily positive response

from both the students and staff at Santa Ana Valley High School. We were asked to return in 2011 with the intention of making “Not Just Another Drink” an annual event. The event was highlighted in a feature article and short video on the UC Irvine main campus website as “an authentic recreation of a drunk-driving accident.”

We sincerely hope our event had a profound and long-lasting impact. By featuring a live program instead of a TV presentation or lecture, we aspired to engage each student so that this experience would create a vivid, emotional memory that will deter them from drinking and driving in the future.

We would like to thank all UCI EMIG members who

worked so hard to make this project possible. Additionally, special thanks goes out to UC Irvine Department of Emergency Medicine, CAL/ACEP, and CAL/AAEM, all whose constant generosity makes all of our UCI EMIG projects possible.

Links:

UCI news story including video:

http://www.uci.edu/features/2010/06/feature_wei_100601.php

UCI EMIG:

www.uciemig.com



University of California Irvine School of Medicine Emergency Medicine Interest Group members