Paco’s Story: Ventura County’s Impaired Driving Fotonovela
Summary of Evaluation Findings

Introduction

A fotonovela is a short book that tells a story using realistic photographs or pictures with corresponding dialogue and thought bubbles. The innovative format makes fotonovelas easy to understand and entertaining to a variety of audiences. Fotonovelas emerged during the late 1940s and were primarily used in Latin American cultures as a method of story-telling. Fotonovelas were originally developed based on the content of movies, but over time became independent stories not related to any particular film.

Today various government and health services agencies across the U.S. use fotonovelas as a tool for communicating information about health-related topics within Hispanic/Latino communities. For example, fotonovelas have been used to address diabetes, Alzheimer’s disease and HIV/AIDS. Given the success of this approach within the health field and a growing need for culturally relevant prevention tools customized for the local Spanish speaking community, Ventura County Behavioral Health (VCBH), Alcohol and Drug Programs developed one of the first prevention fotonovelas focused on the consequences of impaired driving.

As seen in the photograph above, La Historia de Paco (i.e., Paco’s Story) is a Spanish language fotonovela about a father who gets arrested for driving under the influence of alcohol after leaving a family celebration with his wife and children. The photographs and captions illustrate the legal, financial, work, family and emotional problems Paco must deal with as a result of drinking and driving.

Project Goals and Objectives
The fotonovela is intended to strengthen VCBH’s overall impaired driving prevention efforts and reduce associated community-level harms. The primary objectives of the fotonovela are to:

1. Increase knowledge about the severity and associated consequences of impaired driving;
2. Improve decision making and suggest alternatives to impaired driving;
3. Decrease the likelihood of impaired driving; and
4. Increase public discussion surrounding the topic of impaired driving through the creation of “community preventionists” (i.e., individuals who educate family, friends, and others).
Sharing “Paco’s Story” with the Community

VCBH developed “Paco’s Story” in 2009 to increase community awareness about the risks and problems associated with impaired driving. A VCBH Prevention Specialist is the primary person responsible for distributing the fotonovela. During the past two years VCBH’s Prevention Specialist has shared over 15,000 copies of the fotonovela in a variety of settings. The Prevention Specialist frequently visits the Mexican consulate, health fairs, schools, clinics, agricultural nurseries, outreach events, and youth programs and uses the fotonovela as a tool to create dialogue with Spanish speaking community members about the “real” consequences of impaired driving. Each conversation begins with the question, “Do you know the real cost of when people drink and drive?” Individuals are shown the fotonovela and asked to reflect on Paco’s situation and how it might relate to their own lives and community. Each person approached is provided with a copy of the fotonovela and encouraged to share it with others.

While the use of fotonovelas is viewed as a promising tool for the AOD prevention field, research about their effectiveness is limited. Few evaluative studies have been conducted to date. To help fill this gap, VCBH Alcohol and Drug Programs contracted with EvalCorp Research & Consulting to design and carry out an initial evaluation of the fotonovela’s impact to date within the community. The study design and findings from this first known impact evaluation (i.e., measuring outcomes associated with an impaired driving prevention fotonovela) are outlined below.

Multiple methods and tools were utilized to assess the impact of the impaired driving fotonovela. As seen in Table 1, the evaluation participants represented various Spanish-speaking groups residing and working across Ventura County. Both surveys and interviews were used to gather information to inform the study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation Participants</th>
<th>Evaluation Tool</th>
<th>#</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Latino Immigrant Families</td>
<td>Reaction Survey</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young Hispanic/Latino Adults</td>
<td>Follow-up Impact Survey</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Stakeholders &amp; Prevention Specialist</td>
<td>Key Informant Interviews</td>
<td>5</td>
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- **Reaction Surveys** were collected from a total of 91 Hispanic/Latino immigrant families who were given the fotonovela at a Consulado Móvil (Mobile Consulate) informational event held in the City of Ojai. The Reaction Survey was developed to capture initial perceptions about the content of the fotonovela and any changes in persons’ knowledge about impaired driving, decision-making skills, motivation to share and discuss the information learned, and intentions to abstain from and/or prevent impaired driving.

- **Follow-up Surveys** were completed by 22 Hispanic/Latino young adults enrolled in an employment education class in the City of Oxnard. These students received a copy of the fotonovela from the Prevention Specialist and heard a presentation in a classroom setting. One month later, the Prevention Specialist administered the Follow-up Survey to the students, asking them to indicate whether the fotonovela had influenced their behaviors related to impaired driving during the past month, and the extent to which they had prevented others from driving impaired, shared the information, and/or sought out help for someone else with an alcohol-related problem. Additionally, survey respondents were asked to describe whether they believed the fotonovela is an effective prevention tool, what they liked about the fotonovela, and what they would change about it.

- **Key Informant Interviews** were conducted with the Prevention Specialist who is actively involved in all aspects of the fotonovela initiative and four additional project stakeholders who work with the Prevention Specialist and distribute the fotonovela at various events throughout Ventura County. The interviewees work at various agencies/programs operated in Ventura County (i.e., Ventura County Behavioral Health,
Ventura County Area Agency on Aging, Ventura County Health Care Plan, and the Mexican Consulate). The interviews were developed to supplement survey information and to understand the process used to distribute the fotovonela, determine its effectiveness, learn how community members react to the fotovonela as a prevention tool, and to obtain lessons learned/recommendations.

Survey Findings

As shown in Table 2, just over half (55%) of the Reaction Survey respondents and three-quarters (77%) of the Follow-up Survey respondents were female. The average age of the Reaction Survey respondents was 37; whereas, the average age of the Follow-up Survey respondents was 23.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Age Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Mean Age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reaction</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follow-up</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
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</table>

As shown in Figure 1, respondents from both the Reaction Survey and the Follow-up Survey believe that the fotovonela depicted a situation that was relevant and applicable to the Hispanic/Latino community. All of the participants indicated that “Paco’s Story” was easy to understand and is a good way to teach people in their community about drinking and driving. Nearly everyone surveyed believed that the fotovonela made them think of someone they know who drinks and drives. More than 80% of all survey respondents felt it was a story they could relate to. The Follow-up Survey included an additional item which asked participants to specify whether the fotovonela taught them about “the bad things that can happen when people drink and drive.” All of the respondents (100%) indicated that they strongly agreed or agreed with the statement.

Figure 1. Survey Respondent Perceptions Pertaining to Fotovonela Content

I think the fotovonela...

- Was easy to understand
- Is a good way to teach people in my community about drinking and driving
- Made me think of someone I know who drinks and drives
- Told a story I can relate to

When the Follow-up Survey respondents were asked to describe which feature(s) they liked best about the fotovonela the most commonly reported responses were: the realistic events/storyline; lessons and
consequences taught through the fotonovela; the pictures; and, the clarity of the message. Several reported that they liked “everything” about it.

Reaction Survey respondents were asked to indicate whether reading the fotonovela had an impact on their beliefs and future behaviors related to drinking and driving. As presented below, nearly all of respondents expressed that the fotonovela had a positive impact on their intentions regarding drinking and driving behaviors. Most respondents indicated that after reading the fotonovela they either strongly agreed or agreed that they:

- Will talk to friends/family about the bad things that happen when people drink and drive (97%);
- Are more likely to prevent/stop someone from drinking and driving (94%);
- Will decide who is going to be the designated driver before going to any parties, bars, restaurants or places that serve alcohol (93%);
- Are less likely to drink and drive (92%);
- Believe people who drink and drive will get arrested by the police (90%); and,
- Plan to find help for someone they know who has a problem drinking and driving (86%).

As shown in Figure 2, Follow-up Survey respondents reported that the fotonovela influenced a variety of their behaviors related to drinking and driving during the past 30 days. Most notably, 91% of respondents indicated that they made decisions that prevented them from drinking and driving and felt that the fotonovela made an impact on deciding who was going to be the designated driver before going to any parties, bars, restaurants or places that serve alcohol.

**Figure 2. Influence of the Fotonovela on Past 30 Day Behaviors**

Because of reading the fotonovela, during the past month respondents...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behavior</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Made decisions that prevented them from drinking and driving</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decided who was going to be the designated driver before going to any parties, bars, restaurants or places that serve alcohol</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talked to their friends/family about the bad things that happen when people drink and drive</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looked for help for someone they know who has a problem with drinking and driving</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stopped someone from drinking and driving</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Showed the fotonovela to at least one person</td>
<td>67%</td>
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Note: Percentages represent respondents who selected “yes” to the item.
Follow-up Survey respondents were given the opportunity to describe whether they believed the fotonovela was an effective prevention tool. All but two respondents believed that the fotonovela is an effective tool to prevent impaired driving. The remaining two respondents wrote that it is an effective tool for some people, but not for all. Below are a few sample quotes provided by the respondents:

- “Yes, because it shows the consequences of drinking and driving.”
- “Yes, because it makes you think about what is right or wrong.”
- “Yes, it makes you think twice and you realize what can happen.”

Gender and age group differences were examined for Reaction and Follow-up Survey respondents. Statistically significant differences were found only among Follow-up Survey participants with regards to age group. As seen in Table 3, respondents who were 21 years old or older were more likely to show the fotonovela to at least one person and were more likely to stop someone from drinking and driving during the past month as a result of reading the fotonovela (p<.05).

Table 3. Age Comparisons for Follow-up Survey Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Because of reading the fotonovela, during the past month did you...</th>
<th>18-20</th>
<th>21+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Show the fotonovela to at least one person</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stop someone from drinking and driving</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interviewees participating in key informant interviews as part of the evaluation provide services across all areas of Ventura County and work within a number of different sectors that serve multiple populations such as immigrants, undocumented/uninsured children and pregnant women, senior and disabled communities, and those who require counseling services. The interviewees reported being familiar with the fotonovela and the length of their involvement with the initiative ranged from one month to over two years.

- All of the interviewees indicated that the fotonovela is a useful prevention tool, with some emphasizing that the fotonovela had resonated with them personally.
  - “I really liked it because it shows the importance of families and the effects of alcohol. As a mother I can relate.”
  - “The pictures do a good job at conveying what the message is and the consequences. It shows the Hispanic community accurately.”
  - “The fotonovela is a more powerful tool than I was even thinking it could be ... it gets families and people talking about the problem.”
- Some of the interviewees indicated that the most important outcome of the fotonovela is that it increases knowledge about the consequences of drinking and driving among community members. Others said that the most important
impact is that people who read it have a positive reaction to it and that it often reminds community members of someone in their life who has driven while under the influence of alcohol.
  o “It really shows that your actions have consequences and can affect others.”
  o “People learn about the different consequences of impaired driving - police arrest you, courts, fines.”

Similar to Follow-up Survey respondents, most of the interviewees indicated that “Paco’s Story” has helped to increase knowledge about impaired driving or changed beliefs or behaviors about impaired driving. However, one interviewee said that it is hard to tell if it impacted behaviors, stating that often people don’t share those types of feelings. Additionally, one of the participants who indicated that the fotonovela increased knowledge and changed behaviors stated that while the tool may be effective for some people, it may not provide the same effect for others. The impact is dependent on the person.

One interviewee pointed out that the fotonovela was designed for those who only speak Spanish and is most effective with this group. The consequences can be extremely harsh for this group. For example, immigrants who are arrested for DUI lose their opportunity to have a better life.
  o “The goal is to help people who only speak Spanish. That culture is different. No one gives these people the education they need [about impaired driving], but there are harsh punishments for doing something they don’t know about, mostly it is due to ignorance. They are not troublemakers.”

All of the interviewees believed that the fotonovela is an effective tool for reducing impaired driving among Hispanic/Latinos in Ventura County.

Recommendations and Lessons Learned

Suggestions from Survey Respondents and Key Informant Interviewees

While the vast majority of study participants believed the fotonovela was effective as is, several provided useful suggestions for how to improve its effectiveness over time:

Continue to distribute the fotonovela in person and at additional locations
  ▪ During the interviews it was pointed out that it is important to actually “put the book in peoples’ hands to look at ... giving it to them in a folder or envelope is not the same.” This approach helps start conversations with additional groups of people.
  ▪ One interviewee indicated that it would be helpful to distribute the fotonovela at the DMV to people who are renewing their licenses or visiting the DMV for other reasons. Combining the fotonovela with a DMV visit “will help get the word out that there are consequences for drinking and driving.”
  ▪ Another suggestion was to spread the fotonovela initiative to neighboring counties such as Santa Barbara, Los Angeles and San Diego.
  ▪ It was noted that people are always asking for more copies of the fotonovela for their family and friends, and even for distributing at events.

Provide more information about resources in the fotonovela
  ▪ One interviewee suggested adding more information about who people can contact to get help with alcohol-related problems (i.e., telephone numbers for County agencies, courts, police departments, etc.).
  ▪ A follow-up survey respondent suggested “Using the Oxnard Police Department. I would like to see Luis MacArthur’s face since he represents the whole community.”
Consider revising the format of the fotonovela
- One interviewee suggested adding the Consulate logo to the fotonovela.
- Several participants suggested changing the size of the booklet/making it available in different sizes so that it can be convenient for multiple groups.

Expand the initiative to include radio and video formats
- It was suggested that more can be done using additional formats like radionovelas and telenovelas to prevent impaired driving in Ventura County. DVDs depicting the story could be played in places where people sit and wait (e.g., government offices). Also, having the audio dialogue in Spanish and subtitles in Mixteco could help reach more individuals.

Lessons Learned
In addition to the suggestions above, advice for others interested in using fotonovelas to prevent impaired driving was provided. It was emphasized that having a good relationship with community leaders and positive encouragement and support from management is crucial for the success of this type of initiative. Also, tailoring the fotonovela to the target population played a large role in making the fotonovela relevant and meaningful to community members. Lastly, taking a data-driven approach was key to making the fotonovela specific to the area and continues to be important in terms of ongoing evaluation feedback.

For additional information please see www.venturacountylimits.org or www.evalcorp.com