



National Awareness Workshop

Session 3:

An overview of testing





Alcohol and other drugs in the workplace

- Drug testing practices in Australia
- Urine versus saliva testing
- The role of drug testing in dealing with AOD issues in the workplace





Definitions

- Screening Test: Identify the presence of a class of drugs, relatively unsophisticated.
- Confirmatory Test: Used after a positive screening result to identify the presence of a specific drug.
- False Positive: A result indicating the presence of the target drug when it hasn't been consumed.
- False Negative: A result indicating the absence of the target drug when in fact the drug has been consumed.





Risk factors for aviation industry

- Male dominated workforce
- Transport industry
- Shift-work
- Nights spent away from home
- Low level of supervision
- Long working week
- Interaction with public





Other general risk factors

- Changing job role
- Overworked and under worked
- Increasing performance targets and deadlines
- Fear of retrenchment
- Exposure to other peoples stress
- Introduction of new technology and procedures
- Conflict in labour management and relations
- Workplace culture





Why CASA is doing this ...

Established link between alcohol/drug use and:

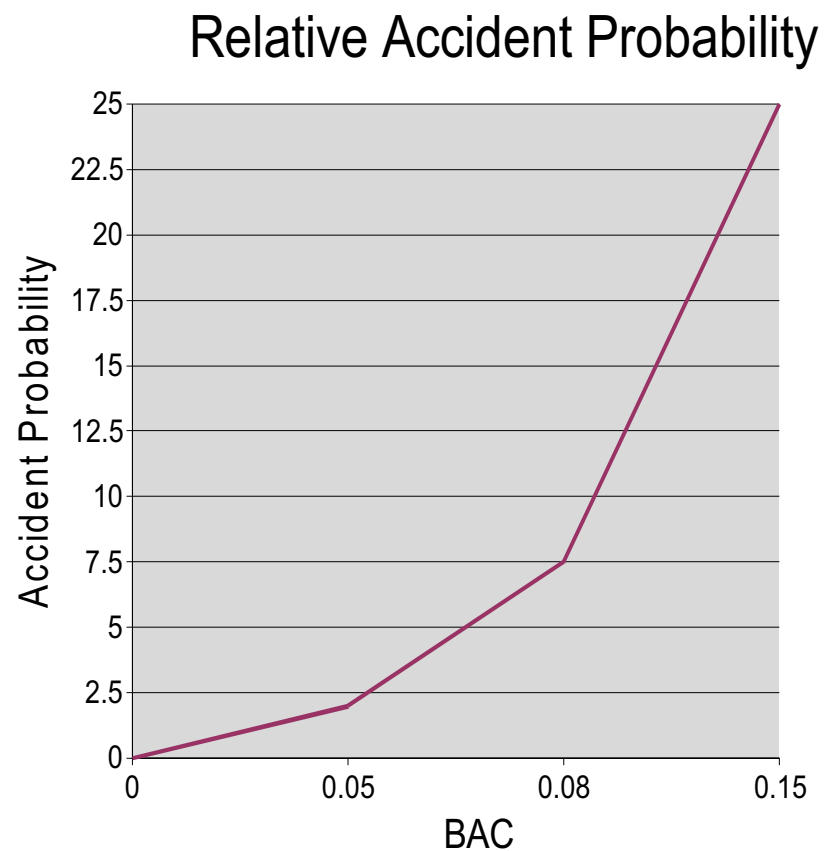
- increased injuries and accidents, and impaired performance at work
- decreased productivity and safety standards
- increased absenteeism

The operational focus of AOD programs in the workplace is about reducing risk





BAC accident probability/risk





Consequences of ignoring it ...

- Preventable injury or death
- Workers compensation and common law damages
- Safety and productivity issues
- Liabilities under OH&S legislation
- Duty of care responsibilities
- Vicarious liability
- Employee liability





Some things we need to know about testing

- Testing in US workplaces for many years:
 - Political and cultural differences
 - War on drugs
 - Zero tolerance of drug users...identifying users
- Australia's national approach is one of harm minimisation
 - outcomes of use
 - identifying risks and harms
 - Random Breath Testing
- Major structural and operational differences in how we view and respond to substance use in our community including testing





What does this mean for our workplace approaches?

- US workplace testing has a focus on detecting illicit substance users and illegal behaviour
- Australian approach (typically) focuses on harm caused by substance use (alcohol or drugs) and possible impairment
 - The focus is on safety in the workplace not solely an individual's illegal behaviour
 - Operational focus for AOD programs in workforce is about reducing risk ...with an aim of identifying at risk use not identifying drug users per se
 - This also influences on how we respond to a positive test





Drug testing methods

■ Urine testing:

- Has been widely used for a number of years as the primary detection method
- Provides standardised procedures for conducting and analysing urine tests (via existing Australian Standard)
- Reliable measures
- Provides recognised basis for a result
- Windows of detection 1 to 60 days
- Issue with detection of cannabis metabolite
- Problem with information on time of drug use or possible impairment at time of collection
- Better at detecting a history of drug use particularly cannabis





Drug testing methods

■ Saliva testing:

- Australian standard currently in draft form with expected formal release in February 2007
- Will provide the same level of confidence as the urine testing standard
- Becoming more popular
 - Ease of sample collection
 - Less invasive than urine
- Time profile of detection (1-24 hours)
 - More likely to reflect current intoxication
 - Avoids cannabis metabolite issue
- Currently preferred and in use by policing agencies as the road side drug driver detection technology





Urine and/or saliva testing

- The debate between the two has had negative effects on the general domain of workplace programs
 - One is better than the other, one is more valid than the other, etc
- Over time both have become reliable accurate measures
- Reality is that different approaches are appropriate for different organisations
- Neither are tests for impairment





Drug testing in the workplace

- Part of a comprehensive workplace alcohol and drug program
- Some elements of a good workplace AOD program are:
 - Policy
 - Education
 - Early Intervention
 - Support and referral
 - Testing





Drug testing in the workplace

- Types of testing:
 - Random
 - Pre employment
 - Reasonable suspicion
 - After accident or serious incident
 - Return to work
 - Self
 - Blanket





Outcomes of a workplace program

- Safer workplace operations
 - Reduce number and cost of accidents
 - Less injury
- Fewer workers testing positive
- Decreased absenteeism
- Promotes more responsible alcohol use
- Reduced consumption (self-reported)





Final Observations...

- Testing should be viewed, performed and evaluated as a prevention program
- We need to learn from random breath testing
- It's not how many positive test results, it's how many negative results
- Lack of independent informed advice to managers
- The nature of the issue is complex:
 - Everyone is an expert
 - Often driven by emotion and value judgements
 - Reactive and poorly thought out strategies





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