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Examining Interpersonal Communication as a Mediator of Campaign Effects on Smokers’ Quit Behaviors

Abstract

This study examined the role of interpersonal communication in the context of a mass media anti-smoking campaign. Specifically, it explored whether conversations about campaign ads and/or about quitting mediated campaign effects on quitting behaviors, as well as the relationship between ad-related and quitting-related conversations. We performed 16 monthly cross-sectional telephone surveys among a representative sample of 3,354 adult Philadelphian smokers and re-interviewed 890 participants after three months. Cross-sectional and lagged mediation models with bootstrap procedures assessed the indirect effects of campaign exposure on outcomes through conversations. In addition, lagged logistic regression analyses tested the causal direction of associations between the variables of interest. Results indicate that conversations about quitting may mediate campaign effects on quitting-related behaviors, and that conversations about the ads may have indirect effects on quitting-related behaviors by triggering quitting-related conversations. These findings demonstrate the importance of measuring interpersonal communication as an intermediate outcome in future campaign evaluations.