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Evaluation of the campaign “if you use drugs, you harm yourself”: conalep case

Evaluación a la campaña si consumes drogas, te dañás a ti mismo: caso conalep

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Janet García González ¹



Selene Céspedes Del Fierro ²



Corresponding:

Selene Céspedes del Fierro, Postal address: Valparaíso,7 Colonia altavista. C.P 64840. Monterrey, Nuevo León. Mexico.
Email: selene.cespedesdl@uanl.edu.mx.



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¹ PhD in communication. Research Professor. Faculty of Communication Sciences. Universidad Autónoma de Nuevo León. Nuevo León, Mexico.

² PhD in Society and Quality of Life. Research Professor at the Faculty of Communication Sciences. Universidad Autónoma de Nuevo León. Nuevo León, Mexico.



Abstract

Objective: This article presents a diagnostic evaluation of the knowledge, perceptions, and skills of upper secondary students from the CONALEP system in Nuevo León, Mexico, within the framework of the national campaign "If You Do Drugs, You Damage Yourself." The study aims to identify students' competencies in audiovisual production and preventive communication as part of a broader educational and public health strategy.

Materials and methods: A quantitative, descriptive, and cross-sectional methodology was used. A non-probabilistic sample of students and teachers was surveyed using a diagnostic instrument designed to assess variables such as knowledge of psychoactive substances, prior experience in prevention campaigns, communication skills, video editing, graphic design, and use of social media for preventive messaging.

Results: The results indicate that most students have limited or partial knowledge of the consequences of drug use and little prior involvement in preventive initiatives. Moreover, there are significant gaps in the technical skills required to make audiovisual content and in the strategic use of digital platforms for awareness-raising. A large proportion of participants expressed a strong need for training in audiovisual production, digital communication strategies, and substance abuse prevention.

Conclusions: The conclusions highlight the importance of integrating training programs that strengthen media literacy, preventive communication, and youth participation in public health campaigns. The article proposes educational strategies that incorporate digital competencies, communication tools, and preventive content into the school environment, aiming to foster a culture of self-care and reduce risk behaviors among adolescents. This study contributes to the field of health promotion and public education by offering empirical evidence to support the design of more effective drug prevention campaigns for youth populations, particularly in school and community settings.

Keywords: Health Promotion; Substance-Related Disorders; Health Education; Social Media; Students.

Resumen

Objetivo: Este artículo presenta una evaluación diagnóstica de los conocimientos, percepciones y habilidades de los estudiantes de secundaria superior del sistema CONALEP en Nuevo León, México, dentro del marco de la campaña nacional "Si consumes drogas, te dañas a ti mismo." El estudio tiene como objetivo identificar las competencias de los estudiantes en producción audiovisual y comunicación preventiva como parte de una estrategia educativa y de salud pública más amplia.

Materiales y métodos: Se aplicó una metodología cuantitativa, descriptiva y transversal a una muestra no probabilística de estudiantes y docentes. El instrumento diagnóstico evaluó variables como conocimiento de sustancias psicoactivas, experiencia previa en campañas de prevención, habilidades comunicativas, edición de video, diseño gráfico y uso de redes sociales con fines preventivos.

Resultados: Los resultados muestran que una gran cantidad de los estudiantes posee un conocimiento limitado sobre los efectos del consumo de drogas y poca participación en iniciativas preventivas. También se identificaron brechas significativas en habilidades técnicas para producir contenido audiovisual y en el uso estratégico de plataformas digitales para generar conciencia. Una proporción considerable de participantes manifestó la necesidad de recibir formación en producción audiovisual, comunicación digital y prevención de adicciones.

Conclusiones: Las conclusiones subrayan la importancia de integrar programas de formación que fortalezcan la alfabetización mediática, la comunicación preventiva y la participación de los jóvenes en campañas de salud pública. Se proponen estrategias educativas que incorporen competencias digitales y herramientas de comunicación en el entorno escolar para fomentar el autocuidado y reducir conductas de riesgo. El estudio aporta evidencia empírica útil para el diseño de campañas de prevención de drogas más efectivas, orientadas a poblaciones juveniles en contextos escolares y comunitarios.

Palabras Claves: Cuidado de la salud; Educación de salud; Redes sociales; Estudiantes

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Introduction

Drug use among adolescents and young people in Mexico is an increasing public health concern, characterized by a variety of substances including alcohol, marijuana, and methamphetamines. According to the National Commission Against Addictions¹, the average age of initiation into psychoactive substance use is between 12 and 17 years, with a worrying increase in the use of fentanyl, vapes, and methamphetamines in recent years. Various studies have shown that the early initiation of drug use is linked with a greater risk of dependence and mental health issues in adulthood².

In contrast, while drug use is prevalent, ongoing efforts are being made to implement preventive measures and educational programs aimed at reducing substance abuse among young people in Mexico. These initiatives focus on improving protective factors and addressing the underlying sociocultural issues contributing to drug consumption. In this context, prevention strategies have evolved to adapt to the communication habits of young people, integrating digital media, interactive campaigns, and audiovisual production as key tools for raising awareness and changing perceptions about drug use. In this setting, the College of Professional Technical Education of Nuevo León (CONALEP NL) proposed the in-class strategy called “If You Do Drugs, You Damage Yourself,” which aims to promote prevention through the production of short impact videos created by students with the support of mentors. These videos, lasting a maximum of 50 seconds, communicate warning messages and raise awareness about the risks of addictive substance use³. However, the effectiveness of this strategy depends largely on the participants' ability to create quality audiovisual content with well-structured messages tailored to young audiences.

Prevention campaigns have evolved toward communication strategies that are closer to young people, incorporating digital narratives and audiovisual production as key dissemination tools. However, the effectiveness of these strategies depends on training students to generate persuasive and high-quality content.

The “If You Do Drugs, You Damage Yourself” campaign aims to raise awareness about the risks of using substances like fentanyl, vapes, and methamphetamines through the creation of short videos. This study evaluates the need for structured training in audiovisual production, assertive communication, and addiction prevention, focusing on the development of key skills in participants, including assertive communication and addiction prevention strategies; scriptwriting and storytelling for preventive video production; video editing and graphic design; and the use of social media for the effective dissemination of preventive campaigns.

Evidence indicates the training needs regarding students' knowledge and skills in producing addiction prevention videos. The hypothesis is that structured training will improve the quality and impact of preventive content, leading to greater awareness and reach on social media.

The complexity of addiction among young people is influenced by various factors, including psychological resilience, exposure to media, and sociocultural dynamics. Effective prevention stra-



tegies must address these diverse elements to mitigate addiction risk and promote healthy behaviors among young people. Adolescent addiction prevention campaigns are crucial for addressing the growing prevalence of substance use among young people. These campaigns employ various strategies, including public health media campaigns, social marketing, anticipatory guidance, and community-based approaches, to effectively prevent substance use and promote healthy behaviors. They rely on multiple media strategies to engage their target audiences through channels such as television, radio, social media, and other digital platforms^{4,5}. Media strategies are important for shaping how people think, sharing information, and motivating behavior change, particularly among young people who are heavily influenced by media⁶. For example, social media campaigns can create viral content that quickly spreads awareness and triggers behavior changes among young people⁷. Because digital media is interactive, it allows for personalized messages and direct communication with audiences, helping public health campaigns have a greater impact^{8,9,10}. The move to digital media has changed public health campaigns by allowing more direct guidance and real-time feedback. Social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram enable interaction and peer influence, making them effective tools for preventing substance abuse^{11,12,13}. Online advertising and influencer marketing have also emerged as important components of digital media strategies.

These approaches make it possible to reach specific demographic groups and use influencers’ credibility and reach to make messages more effective¹⁴.

The effectiveness of these campaigns in preventing substance abuse among adolescents depends on several factors, including message content, dissemination strategies, and audience engagement¹⁵. The effectiveness of these campaigns often depends on their ability to resonate with adolescents through personalized messages, interactive elements, and culturally relevant content.

While these strategies provide a solid framework for addiction prevention, challenges persist, such as media saturation and message fatigue. Additionally, the need for continuous innovation and adaptation of prevention programs is critical to maintain their relevance and effectiveness. Collaboration among public health professionals, educators, and community stakeholders is vital to driving meaningful behavior change and maintaining the impact of prevention efforts.

Preventive interventions targeting social media addiction focus on cognitive-behavioral approaches to raise awareness of the negative effects of excessive use, including anxiety and stress. These strategies emphasize responsible usage and the integration of social media into daily routines¹⁶. Communication is crucial in public health strategies because it helps raise awareness, change behaviors, and ultimately improve health outcomes. Effective preventive communication requires a combination of strategies that consider cultural, social, and individual factors to ensure that the message is well received and acted upon.

In order to better understand these dynamics, it is necessary to frame this study within established theoretical approaches in health communication. From a theoretical perspective, this study is

grounded in health communication and social marketing frameworks, which emphasize the role of message design, audience segmentation, and behavioral influence in preventive interventions. In particular, the study aligns with the principles of health literacy, understood as the capacity of individuals to access, understand, and use health information effectively, and with media literacy, which involves the critical production and interpretation of digital content.

Additionally, the research is supported by the Theory of Planned Behavior, which suggests that behavioral intentions are influenced by attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. In this context, students’ ability to produce audiovisual content and communicate preventive messages can be understood as a form of perceived behavioral control that directly impacts their engagement in prevention strategies.

This theoretical integration allows the study to move beyond descriptive diagnosis and positions audiovisual production as a mediating factor in the development of preventive behaviors among youth.

Engaging citizens in health risk communication is vital. A model that integrates individual, social, and community-oriented factors can enhance participation in preventive behaviors. Perceived shared responsibility acts as a mediator, encouraging individuals to actively engage in health emergency communication and preventive actions¹⁷.

Effective communication in health diplomacy involves raising awareness among the public and stakeholders about global health issues, which is essential for the success of international agreements and health security¹⁸. Furthermore, when addressing specific health issues such as addictions, community- and family-based health communication strategies have proven to be effective.

While preventive communication is essential, challenges such as cultural barriers, misinformation, and varying levels of health literacy can hinder its effectiveness. Adapting communication strategies to the specific needs of the community and fostering collaboration among stakeholders are crucial to overcoming these challenges and ensuring the success of health communication initiatives¹⁹.

The design of health and well-being communication focuses on creating services, products, and artifacts that improve individuals’ health literacy, fostering empowerment and community resilience. Communication design is essential for making health information accessible and comprehensible. By developing tools and messaging tailored to diverse audiences, it enhances health literacy and encourages pro-health behaviors²⁰. Communication designers play a central role in mediating by reorganizing content and relationships.

In this context, filtered exchange within a communication apparatus is crucial, as it effectively conveys the complexities of content and relationships among the involved parties. This requires a mediation of design that goes beyond mere contact or information sharing. At the heart of this network



of information and relationships, the designer considers both physical and virtual channels—such as tools, languages, and devices—as points of contact and access to information. They interpret the needs of the participants and guide them toward knowledge framed as health literacy. Consequently, in communicative terms, the designer functions as a health mediator, translating messages into contexts that ensure access to information, raise awareness, and identify points of contact among actors to foster empowerment and reduce vulnerabilities²¹.

Health literacy refers to the cognitive and social abilities required to access, process, and understand information that promotes health, as well as the capacity to make informed decisions in everyday life. Digital health promotion resources have the potential to reach a wide audience from diverse backgrounds with health-related messages. While knowledge alone is insufficient, it remains a critical component for enhancing health literacy.

Among the various ways to develop initiatives that promote health knowledge and literacy, the broadcasting and sharing of audiovisual material are some of the most widely used because of their accessibility. The competencies and skills required for audiovisual production in health campaigns are multifaceted, involving both technical skills and an understanding of health communication strategies. Audiovisual media have proven effective in various health education contexts, enhancing knowledge, attitudes, and practices across diverse populations. This effectiveness is attributed to the engaging nature of audiovisual content, which combines visual and auditory stimuli to facilitate learning and retention.

The technical skills in audiovisual production must primarily relate to the development of engaging and informative content. This includes scriptwriting, storyboarding, and producing videos that are educational and attractive to the target audience^{22,23}.

Mastering the use of software and video editing tools to create high-quality audiovisual materials is essential. This includes skills in animation, sound design, and visual effects²⁴. Implementing mechanisms to assess the effectiveness of audiovisual tools, such as surveys and focus groups, helps refine content and ensure it meets the audience's needs²⁵.

Furthermore, it is necessary not to overlook the elements of health communication strategies, such as identifying and understanding the specific needs and preferences of the target audience, which is key to effectively personalizing content^{26,27}. Incorporating behavioral change theories into audiovisual content design can enhance its impact on health behaviors²⁸. To ensure that the content is culturally appropriate and accessible to diverse audiences, including those with low literacy levels, it is vital for broad reach and effectiveness²⁹.

Additionally, the inclusion of interactive components, such as quizzes or discussion prompts, can increase engagement and reinforce learning³⁰. Continuous monitoring of the impact of audiovisual campaigns and adapting strategies based on feedback and the changing needs of the audience is crucial for sustained success³¹.

While audiovisual media is a powerful tool for health education, it is important to consider potential challenges such as resource limitations and varying levels of digital literacy among target populations. Addressing these challenges through strategic planning and collaboration can enhance the effectiveness of audiovisual health campaigns.

Materials and methods

This study was developed using a quantitative, descriptive, and cross-sectional approach, aimed at diagnosing the level of knowledge, perceptions, and skills of students regarding addiction prevention and the production of audiovisual content within the framework of the "Si te drogas te dañas" campaign. The research was based on the application of a diagnostic tool and a pre-campaign survey, with no formative intervention or subsequent measurement.

These tools were used to identify areas of opportunity for the design of training strategies in future youth prevention and communication programs. To ensure the internal consistency of the diagnostic instrument, a reliability analysis was conducted using Cronbach's alpha coefficient. The overall instrument showed an acceptable level of reliability ($\alpha = 0.82$), indicating good internal consistency among the items. This supports the validity of the instrument in measuring constructs related to knowledge, communication skills, and audiovisual competencies.

The sample consisted of 101 students from CONALEP Nuevo León across the State of Nuevo León, who participated in the application of the diagnostic survey (Program "Si te drogas te dañas," 2024). The participation of 13 teachers and advisors was also included as part of the data collection and context analysis in the program's implementation. A non-probabilistic convenience sampling method was used, selecting students and teachers who voluntarily participated in the diagnostic evaluation.

For data collection, a diagnostic tool was designed and applied based on the following variables and indicators:

The tool was structured with multiple-choice questions and Likert scales to measure both objective knowledge and participants' perceptions and attitudes regarding preventive content production and risk communication. The instrument was validated through expert judgment, involving specialists in health communication and addiction prevention. The validation process focused on content relevance, clarity, and alignment with the study objectives, ensuring that the instrument adequately captured the variables under analysis.

In Phase 1, the instrument was designed; a questionnaire was created based on the study's objectives and the needs of the call. The content of the instrument was validated by experts in addiction prevention and audiovisual communication. In Phase 2, the pre-campaign survey was administered. The



questionnaire was applied to CONALEP Nuevo León students, collecting data on knowledge, skills, and previous experiences in addiction prevention and video production. Finally, in Phase 3, data analysis was carried out. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequency distributions and measures of central tendency to identify patterns in participants' knowledge and skills.

In addition to descriptive statistical analysis, an inferential statistical test was incorporated to strengthen the analytical rigor of the study. Specifically, the Kruskal–Wallis H test was applied to identify statistically significant differences between groups in selected variables.

The use of this non-parametric test is justified because the data collected through the diagnostic instrument are based on ordinal scales (Likert-type items) and perception-based responses, which do not meet the assumptions of normal distribution required for parametric tests such as ANOVA. Furthermore, the sample size and variability of responses suggest the appropriateness of non-parametric approaches.

The Kruskal–Wallis test allows comparison of median differences between independent groups (e.g., gender, academic program, or level of prior experience in prevention activities), without requiring homogeneity of variances or normality. This approach strengthens the interpretation of differences in knowledge, communication skills, and audiovisual competencies among participants.

Results

The analysis of the data obtained from the diagnostic survey, applied to students, teachers, and advisors, allowed the identification of significant gaps in knowledge about drugs, communication skills, audiovisual production, and digital dissemination strategies for prevention campaigns. The most relevant findings are presented below, organized by variables.

One of the main objectives of the survey was to assess participants' knowledge of the effects of substances such as fentanyl, vapes, methamphetamines, alcohol, and tobacco. The results show that:

- 64.9% of respondents claimed to know the effects of some drugs, but not all;
- 14% stated they did not know the specific effects of any of the substances mentioned;
- Only 21.1% could accurately identify the effects of all the drugs evaluated. These results indicate that most participants have partial knowledge about the impact of drug use, suggesting the need to reinforce education on addiction prevention. A detailed distribution of participants' knowledge is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Knowledge of drug effects among participants

Level of knowledge	Frequency (%)
Full knowledge	21.1%
Partial knowledge	64.9%
No knowledge	14.0%

Source: Own elaboration.

The survey also assessed students' previous participation in campaigns or activities related to addiction prevention:

- 38% reported having participated in one or two specific activities;
- Only 7.1% stated that they had actively led or participated in multiple campaigns.
- This reflects a low level of prior involvement in prevention initiatives, representing an opportunity to encourage participation in school and community campaigns. The frequency corresponding to each participation level are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Participation in prevention campaigns

Participation level	Frequency (%)
None	54.9%
Limited	38.0%
Active	7.1%

Source: Own elaboration.

The analysis of participants' ability to communicate effectively about the risks of drug use showed that:

- 49.1% stated they sometimes have difficulty addressing the topic with confidence;
- 27.2% said they could talk about it clearly and confidently;
- 23.7% mentioned that they had no experience in communication about these issues.

These data suggest the need to develop assertive communication skills among students, particularly in awareness and prevention contexts.

Since the "Si te drogas te dañás" campaign strategy is based on the creation of short prevention videos, participants' video editing and graphic design skills were evaluated:

- 40.3% indicated that they have used basic editing tools such as those available on social media, but not professional editors;
- 40.7% had never edited a video;
- Only 19% stated they had created and edited videos with semi- professional or professional tools.

Regarding graphic design:



- 49.1% have created basic designs with the help of tutorials or simple apps;
- 30.7% have experience designing materials independently;
- 20.2% have never used tools like Canva or Photoshop.

This highlights the importance of providing technical training in audiovisual production and graphic design to ensure that videos generated in the campaign are of quality and have a significant impact. The distribution of participants' video editing and graphic design competencies is summarized in Table 3.

The survey also measured the level of knowledge in digital marketing strategies and the use of social media for the diffusion of prevention campaigns:

- 49.1% have posted basic content on social media but without a structured strategy;
- 21% indicated they have no experience in managing social media;
- 29.8% claimed to know how to use social media to design and launch campaigns effectively.

These findings suggest that while students are familiar with using social media, most have no experience in digital communication strategies focused on addiction awareness and prevention.

Participants were asked about their ability to identify signs of stress, self-harm, or suicidal behavior in other young people:

- 64% stated that they can only recognize obvious signs;
- 23.7% said they know how to identify and act on these signs;
- 12.3% mentioned that they don't know how to recognize risk signs.

Since addiction prevention is linked to mental health, these data highlight the need to include training on identifying and managing risk signs in preventive programs.

To assess students', teachers', and advisors' perceptions regarding the need for training in various areas, the following results were obtained:

- 64.9% believe they need support in creating audiovisual or graphic content;
- 60% mentioned they require training in digital marketing strategies for project diffusion;
- 44.7% stated they might need advice on addressing addiction prevention topics with other young people.

The diagnostic findings reveal gaps in knowledge about drugs, assertive communication, audiovisual production, and digital dissemination of prevention campaigns. These areas must be strengthened through structured training programs that enable students to develop effective skills for creating quality preventive content (Table 3).

Table 3. Audiovisual and digital skills

Skill level	Video Editing	Graphic Design
None	40.7%	20.2%
Basic	40.3%	49.1%
Advanced	19.0%	30.7%

A cross-analysis of variables revealed relevant associations between participation in prevention campaigns and communication skills. Students who had prior experience in preventive activities reported higher levels of confidence in addressing drug-related topics compared to those with no experience.

Similarly, students with previous exposure to digital tools demonstrated better performance in audiovisual production and social media use. These findings suggest that experiential learning and digital engagement are key factors in developing preventive communication competencies. The relationship between competencies and participants’ technical skills is supported by the results presented in Table 3.

To complement the descriptive findings, the Kruskal–Wallis H test was conducted to examine differences in key variables across participant groups.

The analysis revealed statistically significant differences in: Communication skills depending on prior participation in prevention campaigns ($p < 0.05$). Audiovisual production skills based on previous experience with digital tools ($p < 0.05$). However, no statistically significant differences were found in: General knowledge about drug effects across groups ($p > 0.05$). These results suggest that experience-based factors (participation and digital exposure) play a more relevant role than demographic variables in shaping competencies related to preventive communication and audiovisual production.

The participation of 13 teachers and advisors allowed an exploratory assessment of the institutional capacity to support the campaign. Although most advisors reported previous experience in educational activities, limitations were identified in digital communication strategies, audiovisual production, and the use of social media for preventive purposes. These findings suggest that strengthening the competencies of teachers and advisors is equally important for ensuring the effectiveness and sustainability of prevention campaigns within educational settings.

Discussion

This study contributes to the field of health communication by demonstrating that technical competencies in audiovisual production are a determining factor in the effectiveness of youth-led prevention campaigns, an aspect that has been underexplored in previous literature.



The findings allowed a diagnosis of the knowledge, skills, and perceptions of students, teachers, and advisors from CONALEP Nuevo León regarding addiction prevention and the production of preventive audiovisual content within the framework of the national campaign "Si te drogas te dañas".

Unlike previous studies that primarily focus on the effectiveness of prevention campaigns, this research highlights a structural gap between the design of preventive strategies and the actual competencies of participants responsible for implementing them. The findings suggest that current prevention models assume a level of digital and communicative proficiency that students do not possess.

This disconnect may limit the effectiveness of campaigns that rely on user-generated content, such as the “If You Do Drugs, You Damage Yourself” initiative. Therefore, the results challenge the implicit assumption that participation alone leads to meaningful engagement, emphasizing instead the need for structured capacity-building processes.

When analyzing drug knowledge as a key factor in prevention, the results reflect that although students have a basic level of knowledge about the effects of drug consumption, it is insufficient to promote a solid preventive discourse. Moreover, technical skills in audiovisual production and preventive communication strategies show significant deficiencies, highlighting the need for structured training to ensure the quality and impact of the material produced.

Effective prevention strategies that improve awareness and understanding of the risks associated with drug use can significantly reduce the likelihood of addiction and its associated harm. Programs that educate young people about the dangers of drug use, such as addiction and health complications, have been shown to increase awareness and reduce usage rates³².

Studies conducted in various countries³³ indicate that knowledge about drug use correlates with lower rates of substance abuse. For example, understanding the predictors of alcohol and drug use can serve as a basis for specific interventions.

While knowledge is a vital component in preventing drug abuse, it is crucial to recognize that other factors, such as socioeconomic conditions and mental health, also play an important role. A holistic approach that combines education with support systems can yield the best results in the fight against drug use among youth.

Regarding previous experience in campaigns and its impact on the adoption of the preventive message, the diagnosis revealed that more than half of the participants (54.9%) have never participated in addiction prevention activities, and only 7.1% have had an active role in similar campaigns. This indicates that young people have not been central figures in awareness strategies, which can affect the adoption of the preventive message and reduce its impact within their school communities.

Previous campaign experience significantly influences the adoption of preventive messages, as demonstrated by various studies. Understanding how past campaigns shape perceptions can improve the effectiveness of future initiatives, especially the framing of messages. The clarity and experience of the messages also play a crucial role; vivid messages are more likely to resonate with the audience, thereby improving their impact³⁴.

Another element of analysis is preventive communication, plays a crucial role in shaping young people's behaviors and attitudes towards health and well-being by promoting awareness, encouraging positive health practices, and facilitating access to health resources. However, the results of the data reveal showed that nearly half of the participants (49.1%) face difficulties in talking about drug use clearly and confidently.

Some studies³⁶ have demonstrated that interactive forms of preventive education, such as discussions and role-playing, improve students' understanding of health issues and promote positive social attitudes. While preventive communication is essential for promoting health and well-being among young people, it is also important to consider the potential for misinformation and varying levels of participation across different demographics. This underscores the need for continuous evaluation and adaptation of communication strategies to ensure their effectiveness.

This supports the role of audiovisual production and the challenge of digital literacy in preventive campaigns. The challenge of digital literacy in audiovisual production for preventive campaigns among youth is multifaceted, involving the integration of media literacy education, the role of digital platforms, and the need for critical engagement with content.

One of the pillars of the "Si te drogas te dañas" campaign is the creation of 50- second videos as a preventive dissemination tool. However, the data obtained indicate that 40.7% of students have never edited a video, and 49.1% have only used basic editing tools on social media, suggesting a low level of digital literacy in audiovisual production. It should be noted that video interventions allow young people to express their health narratives, fostering a sense of belonging and improving communication with healthcare providers.

Conversely, while digital literacy initiatives are crucial, there remains concern that the rapid evolution of technology may outpace educational efforts, leaving some young people vulnerable to misinformation and exploitation in digital spaces.

In this sense, the use of social media in the recreation and dissemination of preventive messages plays an important role. It is increasingly evident that social media platforms are transitioning from recreational spaces to vital tools for disseminating preventive health messages among young people. In this regard, the diagnosis also revealed that while 49.1% of students have posted content on social media, most do so without a defined strategy, and only 29.8% claimed to know how to design and launch digital awareness campaigns.



Social media plays an important role in health prevention among youth, offering both opportunities and challenges. Platforms like Instagram can effectively engage adolescents through interactive features, promoting healthy behaviors while also posing risks such as exposure to harmful content³⁶. Additionally, social media facilitates the adoption of multiple disease prevention behaviors by leveraging social bonds and community influence³⁷. Finally, one of the most relevant findings of the study is that 64.9% of participants expressed the need for training in the creation of preventive audiovisual content, while 60% requested training in digital marketing strategies and 44.7% in addressing drug consumption.

This confirms that students recognize their areas of opportunity and are open to developing new skills, representing an opportunity to design training programs focused on developing technical and communication skills that strengthen the effectiveness of the campaign.

An additional finding concerns the role of teachers and advisors responsible for guiding students during campaign implementation. The diagnostic evidence suggests that these actors also require training in digital communication, audiovisual production, and preventive health communication. Therefore, strengthening institutional capacities should accompany student training efforts to improve campaign effectiveness.

The Kruskal–Wallis test was used as an exploratory inferential procedure to identify potential differences between groups. Given the diagnostic nature of the study and the sample characteristics, results are presented primarily as indicators of statistical tendencies rather than confirmatory evidence. Future studies should report complete inferential statistics, including H values, degrees of freedom, and effect sizes, to strengthen the robustness of comparisons between groups.

This aligns with previous studies that highlight the importance of experiential learning and digital engagement in health communication strategies. The absence of significant differences in general knowledge suggests that information alone is insufficient, and that skill-based training is essential for effective prevention.

Despite the relevance of the findings, this study has some limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the use of a non-probabilistic convenience sample limits the generalizability of the results to other educational contexts. Second, the study design is cross-sectional and based on a pre-campaign diagnostic evaluation, which does not allow for causal inferences or assessment of changes over time. Additionally, although the inclusion of the Kruskal–Wallis test strengthens the inferential analysis, the absence of longitudinal or experimental data restricts deeper interpretation of the impact of training interventions. Finally, the use of self-reported data may introduce response bias, particularly in variables related to skills and perceptions.

Conclusions

This study provides a key diagnosis of the barriers and opportunities in implementing the "If You Do Drugs, You Damage Yourself" campaign within the context of CONALEP Nuevo León. The results of this research have various implications in the fields of education, addiction prevention, digital communication, and media literacy, highlighting the importance of strengthening preventive strategies through the development of competencies in students.

Based on the identified implications, the following recommendations are proposed to improve the effectiveness of future addiction prevention campaigns with a focus on audiovisual communication:

- a. Implement training programs in audiovisual production and preventive communication. Design practical workshops on scriptwriting, storytelling, video editing, and graphic design, ensuring that students acquire technical skills for creating quality content. Include training in digital marketing and the strategic use of social media to optimize the dissemination of preventive messages on platforms like TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube. Encourage the use of accessible digital tools (Canva, InShot, CapCut, Premiere Rush) so students can edit videos and design graphic materials without the need for advanced software.
- b. Incorporate addiction prevention education strategies into the school curriculum. Develop specific modules on risk perception, decision-making, and socio-emotional skills, integrating them into subjects such as Civic and Ethical Education or Health Education. Promote project-based learning where students research, produce, and disseminate preventive materials within their community. Create spaces for debate and reflection on drug consumption, facilitated by mental health and addiction prevention experts.
- c. Strengthen teacher training in digital communication and addiction prevention. Develop courses for teachers and advisors on managing social media, video editing, and preventive communication strategies, enabling them to better guide students in producing audiovisual materials. Include impact analysis tools to evaluate the effectiveness of preventive campaigns in schools and communities.
- d. Design impact measurement and evaluation strategies. Implement follow-up and evaluation mechanisms to measure the impact of the videos produced on students' perceptions and attitudes towards drug consumption. Conduct post-campaign surveys to determine if exposure to audiovisual materials led to changes in students' knowledge and risk perception. Develop longitudinal studies to assess the sustained effect of preventive communication strategies in educational settings.

The combination of prevention education, health communication training, and digital skills development will enable students not only to internalize the preventive message but also to become creators and multipliers of impactful audiovisual content.



Future research could focus on evaluating formative interventions in audiovisual production and their relationship with changes in young people's perceptions and behaviors regarding drug use. It is also recommended to replicate the diagnosis in other educational contexts to develop training models adapted to different sociocultural realities.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare that they have no business or financial relationships that could be considered a potential conflict of interest

Ethical considerations

The Research Ethics Committee of the College of Technical Professional Education of the State of Nuevo León (CONALEP N.L.) states that the study entitled: "If you take drugs, you harm yourself: CONALEP Case" has been reviewed and approved in accordance with the applicable regulations. The evaluation of the protocol was carried out in accordance with the provisions of the Official Mexican Standard NOM-012-SSA3-2012, which establishes the mandatory ethical, technical and administrative criteria for the execution of research projects on human beings in Mexico, regulating the authorization, monitoring and operation of the Research and Ethics Committees, and guaranteeing the safety, integrity and rights of the participants.

Likewise, the study adheres to the international ethical principles contained in the Declaration of Helsinki, relating to respect for persons, beneficence, non-maleficence and justice.

The project, developed by Dr. Selene Céspedes del Fierro and Dr. Janet García González, was considered viable from an ethical and methodological point of view. It was determined that the research is original and pertinent to the academic community, and that it does not violate individual guarantees, human rights, or the integrity of the students or staff of the CONALEP Nuevo León school community.

Therefore, this Committee issues this act of ethical approval for the corresponding academic and administrative purposes. Record folio: 10032025-002

Use of artificial intelligence

Artificial intelligence was used for the purpose of translating the document and then reviewed and corrected by the authors for drafting inconsistencies. No generative artificial intelligence tools were used in the design of the study, data collection, statistical analysis, interpretation of results, or manuscript writing. All content was developed directly by the authors.

Authors' contributions

Conceptualization: C.D.F.S., G.G.J.; Data curation: C.D.F.S., G.G.J.; Formal analysis: C.D.F.S., G.G.J.; Funding acquisition: C.D.F.S., G.G.J.; Investigation: C.D.F.S., G.G.J.; Methodology: C.D.F.S., G.G.J.; Project administration: C.D.F.S., G.G.J.; Resources: C.D.F.S., G.G.J.; Software: C.D.F.S., G.G.J.; Supervision: C.D.F.S., G.G.J.; Validation: C.D.F.S., G.G.J.; Visualization: C.D.F.S., G.G.J.; Writing – original draft: C.D.F.S., G.G.J.; Writing – review and editing: C.D.F.S., G.G.J.

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