



Media release

Wellington Street, Perth Western
Australia 6000
Tel: (08) 9224 3943 Fax: (08) 9224 3447

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MEDIA RELEASE

A year of PARTY-ing at RPH

Royal Perth Hospital's PARTY (Prevent Alcohol and Risk-related Trauma in Youth) Program has just finished its first year of operation and the feedback is good.

It is too early to measure the long-term affect of the injury prevention program, but the weekly feedback from the 14 to 20-year old participants is that the experience has changed their lives and would affect their behaviour.

The program is licensed from a Canadian program that has shown great success in follow-up research.

State Director for Trauma Services Dr Sudhakar Rao said he had often heard colleagues lament that young people might not end up in the Emergency Department if they understood something of the devastation of trauma injuries.

And so when Royal Perth Hospital colleague Dr Monica Gope returned from working in Canada, espousing an education program bringing young people into the wards, he thought it was worth a try.

Despite being so new, PARTY is so popular with schools that the program is booked up until mid-2008.

Dr Gope said she was impressed by how the program brought useful, relevant information to young people about injury.

"We hope to enable them to recognise potential injury-producing situations, to make informed prevention-oriented choices about activities, and to adopt behaviours and actions that minimise risk," she said.

Students see first hand what it would be like to be injured, through a variety of teaching techniques including lectures, videos, simulated trauma

resuscitation, tours of the Intensive Care Unit, the Emergency Department and rehabilitation wards, and interaction with injury survivors.

Students are encouraged to think: "What if it happened to me?".

Dr Rao said data from the Ottawa Hospital's PARTY program showed that participation in the program reduced the likelihood of participants being involved in certain high-risk accidents.

"The PARTY program allows us to bring reality home in a sobering and educational way without the cliché of reality TV," Dr Rao said.

"Road Trauma has devastating consequences for individual victims, families, friends and society.

"In the hospital setting, we see the lethal mix of youth, speed, alcohol, recreational drugs, peer pressure and biologically immature neural networks every day and we continue to be affected by the trauma injuries we see.

"I am certain that the exposure that PARTY provides has a similar and probably more profound effect on these young minds," he said.

"I am also convinced that this will change the way our next generation of road users view risk taking behaviour."