

# Efficacy of brief alcohol screening intervention for college students (BASICS): a meta-analysis of randomized controlled trials

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Published

2012

Publisher

Substance Abuse Treatment, Prevention, and Policy

Type

Journal article

Volume

7

Issue

40

## **Abstract**

**Background** Many studies reported that brief interventions are effective in reducing excessive drinking. This study aimed to assess the efficacy of a protocol of brief intervention for college students (BASICS), delivered face-to-face, to reduce risky alcohol consumption and negative consequences. **Methods** A systematic review with meta-analysis was performed by searching for randomized controlled trials (RCTs) in Medline, PsycInfo, Web of Science and Cochrane Library databases. A quality assessment of RCTs was made by using a validated scale. Combined mean effect sizes, using meta-analysis random-effects models, were calculated. **Results** 18 studies were included in the review. The sample sizes ranged from 54 to 1275 (median=212). All studies presented a good evaluation of methodological quality and four were found to have excellent quality. After approximately 12 months of follow-up, students receiving BASICS showed a significant reduction in alcohol consumption (difference between means =  $-1.50$  drinks per week, 95% CI:  $-3.24$  to  $-0.29$ ) and alcohol-related problems (difference between means =  $-0.87$ , 95% CI:  $-1.58$  to  $-0.20$ ) compared to controls. **Conclusions** Overall, BASICS lowered both alcohol

consumption and negative consequences in college students. Gender and peer factors seem to play an important role as moderators of behavior change in college drinking. Characteristics of BASICS procedure have been evaluated as more favorable and acceptable by students in comparison with others interventions or control conditions. Considerations for future researches were discussed.

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