

# A sex risk reduction text-message program for young adult females discharged from the emergency department

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## Abstract

**PURPOSE:** To pilot test a text message (SMS) sex risk reduction program among at-risk young adult female patients discharged from an emergency department (ED). **METHODS:** A convenience sample of 52 female patients with hazardous drinking behavior and recent risky sexual encounters were recruited from an urban ED and randomized to the SMS program (n = 23) or a control group (n = 29). All participants completed a web-based questionnaire in the ED and at 3-month follow-up. For 12 weeks, SMS participants were asked to report whether they had a risky sexual encounter in the past week, received theory-based feedback, and were asked if they were willing set a goal to refrain from having another risky encounter. **RESULTS:** Thirty-nine percent of SMS participants completed all weeks of SMS reports, and noncompletion increasing from 12% on week 1 to a 33% by week 12. Three-month follow-up was completed in 56% of participants. In the intervention group, there was an increase in the proportion with condom use with last vaginal sex from 20% (95% CI 4%-48%) to 53% (95% CI 27%-79%) and an increase in always condom use over the past 28 days from 0% (95% CI 0%-22%) to 33% (95% CI 12%-62%). These changes were not statistically different from control participants. **CONCLUSIONS:** SMS programs may be useful to reduce risk for sexually transmitted diseases among at-risk young adults being discharged from the ED. Future trials should examine ways to improve adherence to SMS dialog over time and measure objective outcomes in a larger sample.

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