

Individual-level interventions to reduce college student drinking: a meta-analytic review

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Abstract

In light of increasing numbers of controlled studies evaluating alcohol abuse prevention interventions for college drinkers, we conducted a meta-analysis to summarize the current status of the literature. The meta-analysis includes 62 studies, published between 1985 to early 2007, with 13750 participants and 98 intervention conditions. All studies were content coded for study descriptors, participant characteristics, and intervention components. We derived weighted mean effect sizes for alcohol interventions versus comparison conditions for consumption variables and alcohol-related problems, over four measurement intervals. Over follow-up intervals lasting up to 6 months, participants in risk reduction interventions drank significantly less relative to controls. Students receiving interventions also reported fewer alcohol-related problems over longer intervals. Moderator analyses suggest that individual, face-to-face interventions using motivational interviewing and personalized normative feedback predict greater reductions in alcohol-related problems. Implications for future research include attention to maintenance of effects, and developing more efficacious interventions for at-risk college drinkers.

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