

Long-term effects of a communitywide alcohol server training intervention

Author(s)

Buka SL, Birdthistle IJ.

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Abstract

OBJECTIVE: The Rhode Island Community Alcohol Abuse and Injury Prevention Project (CAAIPP), implemented from 1984 through 1989, employed the "community gatekeeper" approach to reduce alcohol-related injuries and deaths. Targeting alcohol servers rather than drinkers, community-wide interventions were designed and implemented to encourage responsible serving behaviors through the adoption of techniques of responsible service. The primary goal of the CAAIPP server intervention evaluation was to assess both short-term and long-term changes in behavior of alcohol beverage servers who were recipients of CAAIPP training. **METHOD:** A 5-hour training curriculum on "Responsible Alcohol Service" was offered to all alcohol servers in a randomly selected study community. A prospective study design was used to evaluate long-term changes in the self-reported behavior of 321 trainees using three time-points over 5 years. A cross-sectional survey was conducted 4 years posttraining to compare rates of self-reported server behaviors in the intervention community (n = 106) with two comparison communities (nA = 56, nB = 49). **RESULTS:** Fifteen months after training, trainees reported significantly higher levels of desired serving behavior than nontrained servers. Though positive effects of server training diminished with time, responsible serving behavior 4 years posttraining remained higher than pretraining levels. The impact appeared greatest for servers with fewer years serving experience, wait-persons, younger servers and servers who worked in establishments without written policies regarding serving practices. **CONCLUSIONS:** The results with regard to modifying server behavior are positive and indicate that server interventions shown to be efficacious should be implemented. Training programs that target specific serving skills in repeat sessions may be most promising for improving server behavior, particularly among both young and new servers working in establishments without written policies regarding serving practices.

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