

The effectiveness of web-based interventions designed to decrease alcohol consumption -a systematic review

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Abstract

OBJECTIVE: To review the published literature on the effectiveness of web-based interventions designed to decrease consumption of alcohol and/or prevent alcohol abuse.**METHOD:** Relevant articles published up to, and including, May 2006 were identified through electronic searches of Medline, PsycInfo, Embase, Cochrane Library, ASSIA, Web of Science and Science Direct. Reference lists of all articles identified for inclusion were checked for articles of relevance. An article was included if its stated or implied purpose was to evaluate a web-based intervention designed to decrease consumption of alcohol and/or to prevent alcohol abuse. Studies were reliably selected and quality-assessed, and data were independently extracted and interpreted by two authors.**RESULTS:** Initial searches identified 191 articles of which 10 were eligible for inclusion. Of these, five provided a process evaluation only, with the remaining five providing some pre- to post-intervention measure of effectiveness. In general the percentage quality criteria met was relatively low and only one of the 10 articles selected was a randomized control trial.**CONCLUSION:** The current review provides inconsistent evidence on the effectiveness of electronic screening and brief intervention (eSBI) for alcohol use. Process research suggests that web-based interventions are generally well received. However further controlled trials are needed to fully investigate their efficacy, to determine which elements are keys to outcome and to understand if different elements are required in order to engage low- and high-risk drinkers.

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