

# Experimental evaluation of the Swedish National Alcohol Helpline

<b>Submission date</b>	<b>Recruitment status</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Prospectively registered
21/11/2015	No longer recruiting	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Protocol
<b>Registration date</b>	<b>Overall study status</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Statistical analysis plan
18/01/2016	Completed	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Results
<b>Last Edited</b>	<b>Condition category</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Individual participant data
15/02/2023	Mental and Behavioural Disorders	

## Plain English summary of protocol

### Background and study aims

Drinking harmful amounts of alcohol can damage a person's health and can lead to both social and economic costs. The Swedish National Alcohol Helpline provides telephone counselling to people that indulge in harmful and hazardous drinking who wish to change their drinking habits. The main aim of this study is to compare the effect of the current telephone counselling provided by the helpline, based on Motivational Interviewing techniques (treatment as usual), with a treatment based on self-help material and proactive follow-up counselling.

### Who can participate?

Adults (aged at least 18) calling the Swedish National Alcohol Helpline for the first time in order to receive support to change their alcohol drinking habits

### What does the study involve?

Participants are randomly allocated to one of two groups. Those in group 1 receive counselling currently offered by the Swedish National Alcohol Helpline (treatment as usual). The counselling is delivered according to each participants preference and involves Motivational interviewing and Cognitive Behavioural Therapy. Participants in group 2 are given a self-help booklet with information and exercises to help them change their alcohol drinking habits, followed by one session via telephone by a counsellor from the Helpline. All participants are assessed for their alcohol drinking habits and other health related statuses by telephone interview at the beginning of the study, as well as six and twelve months later.

### What are the possible benefits and risks of participating?

Changes in alcohol drinking habits is very likely to lead to improvements in health and well-being. There is no risk of direct physical harm to participating in this study.

### Where is the study run from?

Department of Public Health Sciences, Karolinska Institutet (Sweden)

### When is study starting and how long is it expected to run for?

October 2014 to December 2018

Who is funding the study?  
1. Public Health Agency of Sweden  
2. Stockholm County Council

Who is the main contact?  
Prof. Maria Rosaria Galanti  
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## Contact information

Type(s)  
Scientific

Contact name  
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## Additional identifiers

Protocol serial number  
N/A

## Study information

Scientific Title  
A randomized controlled study comparing the effectiveness of two counselling models at the Swedish National Alcohol Helpline in promoting changes of drinking habits among persons with hazardous or harmful alcohol use.

Acronym  
AlC\_HL

Study objectives  
Current hypothesis as of 10/05/2017:  
An alternative, partly proactive counselling model complemented by self-help material is more effective than the current on-demand counselling model in promoting change in a client's alcohol drinking habits, measured by shift to lower AUDIT risk levels 6 and 12 months after the initial contact.

Previous hypothesis:  
An alternative, partly proactive counselling model complemented by self-help material is as

effective as the current on-demand model in promoting change in a client's alcohol drinking habits, measured by AUDIT scores 6 and 12 months after the initial contact.

## **Ethics approval required**

Old ethics approval format

## **Ethics approval(s)**

Ethical Review Board of Stockholm Region, 06/11/2014, ref: 2014/1732-31/5

## **Study design**

Current study design as of 10/05/2017:

Single-centre superiority pragmatic randomized trial

Previous study design:

Single-centre non-inferiority pragmatic randomized controlled trial

## **Primary study design**

Interventional

## **Study type(s)**

Prevention

## **Health condition(s) or problem(s) studied**

Hazardous and harmful alcohol use

## **Interventions**

Participants are randomly allocated to one of two treatments:

1. The Alcohol Helpline's free-of-charge telephone service (treatment as usual) designed to provide support to persons whose alcohol-related problems are moderate to severe. The current counselling is based on Motivational Interviewing (MI) combined with elements of Cognitive Behaviour Therapy and is adapted to the severity of the problems and to the changes that the client is ready to adopt. In practice, the intervention for a specific individual may consist of a varying number of client-activated (reactive) and/or counsellor-activated (proactive) sessions according to the client's preference.

2. The alternative counselling model which includes the delivery of self-help booklet followed by a proactive call where the Helpline counsellor monitors the client's progress and use of the material. The material is designed as a guide to the change of alcohol use patterns.

## **Intervention Type**

Behavioural

## **Primary outcome(s)**

Change of alcohol drinking habits measured with AUDIT score. The outcome assessment will be done at 6 and 12 month follow-up for each participant in the trial. Since entry in the trial will be at different dates the follow-up will follow a staggered schedule.

## **Key secondary outcome(s)**

1. Depression or anxiety disorder (GAD) measured through MINI
2. Number of days of sick leave
3. Care seeking from other services for alcohol problems

The outcome assessment will be done at 6 and 12 month follow-up for each participant in the trial. Since entry in the trial will be at different dates the follow-up will follow a staggered schedule.

#### **Completion date**

31/12/2018

## **Eligibility**

#### **Key inclusion criteria**

1. First time caller of the National Alcohol Helpline
2. Seeking support to change his/her own alcohol drinking habits
3. At least 18 years of age
4. Provide informed consent

#### **Participant type(s)**

Other

#### **Healthy volunteers allowed**

No

#### **Age group**

Adult

#### **Lower age limit**

18 years

#### **Sex**

All

#### **Total final enrolment**

261

#### **Key exclusion criteria**

1. Very severe alcohol problems requiring clinical treatment
2. Abuse of other drugs
3. Severe mental illness
4. Acute health problems

#### **Date of first enrolment**

27/05/2015

#### **Date of final enrolment**

31/12/2017

## **Locations**

#### **Countries of recruitment**

Sweden

**Study participating centre**

Centre for Epidemiology and Community Medicine, Stockholm County Council  
Tomtebodavägen 18a  
Stockholm  
Sweden  
17177

## Sponsor information

**Organisation**

Karolinska Institute

**ROR**

<https://ror.org/056d84691>

**Organisation**

Centre for Epidemiology and Community Medicine, Stockholm County Council

## Funder(s)

**Funder type**

Government

**Funder Name**

Public Health Authority of Sweden

**Funder Name**

Stockholms Läns Landsting

**Alternative Name(s)**

Stockholm County Council

**Funding Body Type**

Government organisation

**Funding Body Subtype**

Local government

**Location**

Sweden

## Results and Publications

**Individual participant data (IPD) sharing plan**

The datasets generated during and/or analysed during the current study are not expected to be made available

**IPD sharing plan summary**

Not expected to be made available

**Study outputs**

Output type	Details	Date created	Date added	Peer reviewed?	Patient-facing?
<a href="#">Results article</a>	results	08/07/2019	18/03/2020	Yes	No
<a href="#">Results article</a>		27/04/2021	15/02/2023	Yes	No
<a href="#">Protocol article</a>	protocol	06/06/2017		Yes	No
<a href="#">Participant information sheet</a>	Participant information sheet	11/11/2025	11/11/2025	No	Yes