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# Efficacy of text-messages in helping former patients (previously treated in addiction centers) to maintain their substance use goal

**Submission date**
10/07/2017

**Recruitment status**
Stopped

**Registration date**
12/07/2017

**Overall study status**
Stopped

**Last Edited**
04/08/2021

**Condition category**
Mental and Behavioural Disorders

[X] Prospectively registered
[ ] Protocol
[ ] Statistical analysis plan
[ ] Results
[ ] Individual participant data
[ ] Record updated in last year

## Plain English summary of protocol

Background and study aims
Text-messaging-based aftercare has been shown to be effective for various mental health problems such as eating disorders and alcohol withdrawal. Former patients can generally be reached easily with text messages, which might help to reduce their risk of relapsing. The aim of this study is to assess the effectiveness of text messages in helping former patients (previously treated in addiction centers) to maintain their substance use goal during the 6 months following inpatient treatment.

Who can participate?
Patients aged 18 and over who have completed their addiction treatment

What does the study involve ?
Participants are randomly allocated to one of two groups shortly before leaving the treatment center. Participants in one group receive automatically generated supportive text-messages to help them to avoid relapses. Participants in the other group receive semi-automatically generated, individualised supportive text messages and also telephone calls from a counselor. Text messages are sent for a period of six months after patients have left treatment, first weekly, then biweekly. Both groups are assessed for their maintenance of abstinence or controlled drinking (depending on personal goals) during the 6 months following inpatient treatment.

What are the possible benefits and risks of participating ?
Former patients who receive text message based aftercare might be encouraged to avoid relapses. No risks are expected.

Where is the study run from?
1. Swiss Research Institute for Public Health and Addiction ISGF (Switzerland)
2. Akzente Prävention und Suchttherapie, Luzern (Switzerland)
3. Die Alternative, Ottenbach (Switzerland)
4. Freihof Küsnacht, Küsnacht (Switzerland)

5. Forelhaus, Zürich (Switzerland)
6. RehabilitationsZentrum Lutzenberg, Lutzenberg (Switzerland)
7. Suchttherapiebärn, Bern (Switzerland)

When is the study starting and how long is it expected to run for?
September 2015 to July 2020

Who is funding the study?
Federal Office of Public Health (FOPH) (Switzerland)

Who is main contact ?
Mrs Susanne Schaaf
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# Contact information

### Type(s)
Scientific

### Contact name
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# Additional identifiers

### Protocol serial number
PEG201410

# Study information

### Scientific Title
Efficacy of text messaging-based aftercare following inpatient addiction treatment - DASA (Drug Alcohol SMS Aftercare): a randomised controlled trial

### Acronym
DASA – Drug Alcohol SMS Aftercare

### Study objectives

Individualised SMS-based intervention (including information on personal reward suggestions and coping strategies on how to deal with tempting situations, as well as in addition phone calls from therapists) is more effective than non-individualised SMS-based intervention to maintain abstinence or controlled drinking (depending on the personally set goal).

## Ethics approval required
Old ethics approval format

## Ethics approval(s)
Ethics Committee Zurich (lead committee), 19/06/2017, ref: PB_2016_02180

## Study design
Multicentre randomised active-controlled parallel-group trial

## Primary study design
Interventional

## Study type(s)
Prevention

## Health condition(s) or problem(s) studied
Relapse prevention for former patients who completed addiction treatment successfully

## Interventions
Randomisation will be undertaken centrally by the Swiss Reasearch Institute for Public Health an Addiction ISGF. The questionnaires will be handed out to the participating treatment centers, and will be stratified by gender and main problem substance of patients, resulting in four combinations: a) female, alcohol, b) male, alcohol, c) female, drug (not-prescribed opiates, cocaine or cannabis), c) male, drug (ditto). Within each combination, the questionnaires are - according to the randomisation list - assigned to either control group or intervention group. The therapist fills in the questionnaire together with the client. The allocation to the study group will be disclosed on the last page of the questionnaire

The patients will be randomly assigned to one of two study groups shortly before leaving the treatment center:
1. Minimal/standardised intervention control group (CG): automatically generated, standardised text-messages, standardised supportive messages: first weekly, then biweekly SMS regarding maintenance of abstinence or controlled alcohol use respectively; support from advisor on demand
2. Intervention group (IG): semi-automatically generated, individualised text-messages: first weekly, then bi-weekly SMS regarding maintenance of abstinence resp. controlled alcohol use; individualised supportive text-messages reward, coping strategies) and active contacting by advisor in case of not-maintaining abstinence resp. controlled alcohol use.

SMS messages will be sent for a period of six months after patients have left treatment, first weekly, then biweekly.

The primary outcome measures are assessed at 6-months follow up. Frequency of use of the respective main problem substance within the previous six months will be assessed. Participants indicating that they never used the substance within the previous six months are considered as abstinent (prolonged abstinence). Concerning controlled drinking, the participants should

indicate whether or not they always maintained their personal goal of alcohol use within the previous six months (prolonged maintenance of drinking goal).

### Intervention Type
Other

### Primary outcome(s)
Maintenance of abstinence (illegal substances such as opiates, cocaine, cannabis; legal substance: alcohol) or maintenance of controlled drinking (depending on personal goals) during the 6 months following inpatient treatment, assessed by self-report at 6-months follow up

### Key secondary outcome(s))
1. Retention to intervention program (intervention group vs control group), assessed by measuring the proportion of participants which did not actively discontinue programme participation during the study period of 6 months by informing the study center via phone, text message or e-mail
2. 7-day and 30-day point prevalence abstinence and maintenance of controlled drinking, respectively, assessed by self-report at 6-months follow up
3. Acceptance of intervention program by former patients (intervention group vs control group), assessed using the log files of the text messaging system during the study period of 6 months

### Completion date
31/07/2020

### Reason abandoned (if study stopped)
Objectives no longer viable

## Eligibility

### Key inclusion criteria
1. Age >=18 years
2. Residential treatment will presumably be finished within one week
3. Main problem substances at beginning of treatment: opioids, cocaine, cannabis or alcohol
4. Personally set goals: abstinence (re. illegal substances and alcohol) or controlled drinking respectively
5. Owning a mobile phone

### Participant type(s)
Other

### Healthy volunteers allowed
No

### Age group
Adult

### Lower age limit
18 years

### Sex

All

**Key exclusion criteria**
Cognitive or linguistic deficits or health impairments which impede following the SMS dialogue

**Date of first enrolment**
01/08/2017

**Date of final enrolment**
15/06/2019

# Locations

**Countries of recruitment**
Switzerland

**Study participating centre**
**RehabilitationsZentrum Lutzenberg**
Lutzenberg
Switzerland
9426

**Study participating centre**
**Suchttherapiebärn**
Bern
Switzerland
3006

**Study participating centre**
**Akzent Prävention und Suchttherapie**
Luzern
Switzerland
6003

**Study participating centre**
**Die Alternative**
Ottenbach
Switzerland
8913

**Study participating centre**

**Freihof Küsnacht**
Küsnacht
Switzerland
8700

**Study participating centre**
**Forelhaus**
Zürich
Switzerland
8003

# Sponsor information

**Organisation**
Swiss Research Institute for Public Health and Addiction ISGF

**ROR**
https://ror.org/02crff812

# Funder(s)

**Funder type**
Government

**Funder Name**
Federal Office of Public Health (FOPH)

# 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 due to a lack of participants' consent to share data with other institutions.

**IPD sharing plan summary**
Not expected to be made available

**Study outputs**

| Output type | Details | Date created | Date added | Peer reviewed? | Patient-facing? |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Participant information sheet | Participant information sheet | 12/07/2017 | 12/07/2017 | No | Yes |

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|---|---|---|---|---|
| Participant information sheet | 11/11/2025 | 11/11/2025 | No | Yes |