

A pilot study of alcohol policy and social norms in Welsh Universities

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| Submission date 07/11/2011 | Recruitment status No longer recruiting | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Prospectively registered <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Protocol |
| Registration date 23/01/2012 | Overall study status Completed | <input type="checkbox"/> Statistical analysis plan <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Results |
| Last Edited 25/09/2018 | Condition category Mental and Behavioural Disorders | <input type="checkbox"/> Individual participant data |

Plain English summary of protocol

Background and study aims

Although originating in the USA, interest is growing in applying the social norms approach to reducing drinking behaviours in UK universities. This approach is based on the assumption that students' perceptions of the norms of their peers are highly influential, but that these perceptions are often incorrect. That is, students often believe that their peers drink more, and experience more alcohol-related consequences, than they actually do. Social norms interventions therefore aim to correct these inaccurate perceptions, and in turn, to change behaviours.

Earlier in 2011, a survey was conducted by the Cardiff Institute of Society and Health, in partnership with NUS Wales and Drinkaware to assess first year university students' perceptions of peer drinking behaviour and consequences in four Welsh Universities. Data from this survey have informed the development of materials which aim to correct incorrect perceptions of drinking norms, which will be delivered through university halls of residence.

This study aims to examine the impact of these materials on first year students' drinking and alcohol-related consequences in four universities, and to establish the feasibility of a larger national trial.

Who can participate?

All first year students resident in halls of residence in four Welsh Universities will be invited to participate.

What will the study involve?

The study will involve comparison of self-reported drinking behaviours and alcohol-related consequences among students living in halls of residence randomly selected to receive the social norms materials, comprising drinks mats, posters and mirror stickers providing information on drinking norms in Welsh Universities, with those students living in halls randomly selected not to receive such materials. Students within each hall will be asked to complete an anonymous web-based or paper questionnaire describing their alcohol consumption and related consequences.

What are the possible benefits and risks of participating?

Students will be offered entry into a £100 prize draw as an incentive for participation.

There are no known risks of participating in the study. Contact details for student support

services are included at the end of the questionnaire, in case its completion raises any difficult issues for students.

Where will the study run from?

The study will be conducted by the Cardiff Institute of Society & Health, School of Social Sciences within Cardiff University.

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

Participants will be invited to participate in a post-intervention survey between February and May 2012.

Who is funding the study?

Alcohol Research UK (formerly known as the Alcohol Education and Research Council).

Who is the main contact?

Dr Simon Murphy

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Contact information

Type(s)

Scientific

Contact name

Dr Simon Murphy

Contact details

Cardiff Institute of Society & Health

School of Social Sciences

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Additional identifiers

Protocol serial number

n/a

Study information

Scientific Title

An exploratory cluster randomised controlled trial of a halls of residence based social norms marketing intervention to reduce alcohol consumption in first year undergraduates in Welsh universities

As of 14/02/2012, anticipated start date of trial has been updated from 14/02/2012 to 20/02/2012.

Study objectives

Students living in halls in which a social norms based intervention is delivered will report lower levels of alcohol consumption and alcohol related problems than those in halls where it is not.

Ethics approval required

Old ethics approval format

Ethics approval(s)

Cardiff University School of Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee, 8th December 2011 , reference no. SREC/827

Study design

Cluster randomised controlled trial

Primary study design

Interventional

Study type(s)

Prevention

Health condition(s) or problem(s) studied

Alcohol consumption

Interventions

Intervention

Social norms marketing materials, including posters and drinks mats to be distributed within halls of residence. Messages communicate discrepancies between actual drinking levels and prevalence of alcohol-related consequences amongst first year students, and student's perceptions of these.

Control

Usual practice

Intervention Type

Other

Phase

Not Applicable

Primary outcome(s)

Alcohol consumption (units per week) measured using the Daily Drinking Questionnaire (DDQ)

Key secondary outcome(s)

1. Frequency of alcohol consumption [Daily Drinking Questionnaire (DDQ)]
2. Frequency of binge drinking (DDQ)
3. Prevalence of higher risk drinking, assessed via Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test (AUDIT-C)
4. Change in perceptions of alcohol-related norms, assessed using the Drinking Norms Rating Form
5. Alcohol related problems measured using the Rutgaers Alcohol Problem Index

Completion date

01/05/2012

Eligibility

Key inclusion criteria

First year undergraduate students living in halls of residence in four Welsh Universities

Participant type(s)

Patient

Healthy volunteers allowed

No

Age group

Adult

Sex

All

Key exclusion criteria

Students not in their first year or not living in halls

Date of first enrolment

20/02/2012

Date of final enrolment

01/05/2012

Locations

Countries of recruitment

United Kingdom

Wales

Study participating centre

Cardiff Institute of Society & Health

Cardiff

United Kingdom

CF10 3BD

Sponsor information

Organisation

Alcohol Research UK (UK)

ROR

<https://ror.org/00dpq7q77>

Funder(s)

Funder type

Charity

Funder Name

Alcohol Research UK (formerly Alcohol Education and Research Council) (UK) (Grant number 502302, sponsors reference CR 11/12 07 DA)

Alternative Name(s)

Funding Body Type

Private sector organisation

Funding Body Subtype

Other non-profit organizations

Location

United Kingdom

Results and Publications

Individual participant data (IPD) sharing plan

IPD sharing plan summary

Not provided at time of registration

Study outputs

| Output type | Details | Date created | Date added | Peer reviewed? | Patient-facing? |
|---|-------------------------------|--------------|------------|----------------|-----------------|
| Results article | results | 18/04/2013 | | Yes | No |
| Protocol article | protocol | 13/03/2012 | | Yes | No |
| Participant information sheet | Participant information sheet | 11/11/2025 | 11/11/2025 | No | Yes |