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Effectiveness of electronic mail based alcohol intervention with university students: a study comparing the effect of assessment only with personalised written feedback

Submission date
30/06/2011

Recruitment status
No longer recruiting

Registration date
05/09/2011

Overall study status
Completed

Last Edited
06/10/2016

Condition category
Mental and Behavioural Disorders

[ ] Prospectively registered
[ ] Protocol
[ ] Statistical analysis plan
[X] Results
[ ] Individual participant data

Plain English summary of protocol

Background and study aims
Several studies have assessed various forms of screening and interventions to change students' drinking behaviour. This can be done online, asking people to complete a few questions and giving brief feedback and advice where it may be needed. Electronic screening and brief intervention (e-SBI) is as an efficient approach to reach large numbers of adolescents as a result of high levels of internet use among young people. This study aims to find out whether e-SBI works, and whether it is necessary to receive feedback or whether simply answering questions helps people to think about their drinking and to change it.

Who can participate?
All freshmen at Linköping University, Sweden

What does the study involve?
Participants are randomly allocated into three groups. The first group receive an e-mail asking them to participate in a short 9-question survey about alcohol habits. After completing the questionnaire they immediately receive feedback about their alcohol consumption. The second group are not contacted at all until the end of the study. The third group complete the questionnaire without getting feedback. After 3 months all three groups receive an email asking them to participate in a seemingly unrelated survey about students' alcohol habits with no reference to the previous survey. All students at this time have an opportunity to receive personalised feedback.

What are the possible benefits and risks of participating?
The benefit could be that participants consider their alcohol habits and might change these to be more healthy. No risks are anticipated for the participants.

Where is the study run from?
Linköping University (Sweden)

When is the study starting and how long is it expected to run for?
September to December 2010

Who is funding the study?
Swedish Council for Working Life and Social Research (Sweden)

Who is the main contact?
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Contact information

Type(s)
Scientific

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Additional identifiers

Study information

Scientific Title
Randomised controlled trial of the effectiveness of electronic mail based alcohol intervention with university students: dismantling the assessment and feedback components

Study objectives
The overall aim of the study is to evaluate the effectiveness of electronic screening and brief intervention (e-SBI), employing an randomised controlled trial (RCT) design that takes account of baseline assessment reactivity (and other possible effects of the research process) due to the similarity between the intervention and assessment content. The hypothesis is that assessment per se have an impact on drinking behaviour however to a lesser extent that the intervention.

Ethics approval required
Old ethics approval format

Ethics approval(s)
Regional Ethics Committee in Linköping, Sweden, 12/10/2010, ref: 2010/291-31

Primary study design

Interventional

Study design
Randomised controlled trial

Study type(s)
Screening

Health condition(s) or problem(s) studied
Alcohol risk/drinking behaviour

Interventions
The present study is designed in such a manner that the control group is as non contaminated as possible from the possible effects of research participation. Two kind of control groups will therefore be included in the study
1. A delayed intervention group that do not know they will get an intervention after 3 month
2. A screening only group without intervention at baseline who also do not know they will get an intervention after 3 months, when they will be offered an e-SBI following outcome assessment.

Students in the screening group (S) will receive a mail from the local student health care asking them to participate in a short 9 question survey concerning alcohol habits among students in Linköping. They will be informed that the survey is part of the university´s work with alcohol in general.

Students in the control group (C) will not be aware that they have been selected for a study before 3 months when students in all three groups (e-SBI, S and C) will receive a mail from the research group asking them to participate in a survey about students alcohol habits with no reference to the previous survey 3 month earlier with the research procedures otherwise identical to those used in Luleå.

After 3 month all students in both the intervention and control groups will receive a mail from the research group asking them to participate in a survey about students alcohol habits with no reference to the previous survey 3 month earlier. This is done in order minimise a Hawthorne effect in the intervention group i.e. being aware that the results will be compared with the first survey. The appearance of the two surveys, as well as their source, will be different from each other to protect against this possibility. All students will at this time receive a normative personalised feedback opportunity directly on the screen of their computer and have the possibility to print it out. The students will also automatically receive a mail with their feedback so they can read the feedback at a later stage.

Intervention Type
Other

Phase
Not Applicable

Primary outcome(s)
1. Average alcohol consumption
2. Frequency of heavy episodic drinking

3. Maximal drinking at one occasion
Measured at baseline before they get a written feedback and after 3 months before another written feedback

Key secondary outcome(s)
Proportion of students with risky drinking, measured at baseline before they get a written feedback and after 3 months before another written feedback.

Completion date
31/12/2010

Eligibility

Key inclusion criteria
All freshmen at Linköping University, Sweden

Participant type(s)
Patient

Healthy volunteers allowed
No

Age group
Adult

Sex
All

Key exclusion criteria
Does not meet inclusion criteria

Date of first enrolment
01/09/2010

Date of final enrolment
31/12/2010

Locations

Countries of recruitment
Sweden

Study participating centre
Linköping University
Linköping
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5581 83

Sponsor information

Organisation
Swedish Council for Working Life and Social Research (Sweden)

ROR
https://ror.org/02d290r06

Funder(s)

Funder type
Research council

Funder Name
Swedish Council for Working Life and Social Research (Sweden) (Grant number: 2010-0024)

Alternative Name(s)
Swedish Council for Working Life and Social Research, FAS

Funding Body Type
Private sector organisation

Funding Body Subtype
Other non-profit organizations

Location
Sweden

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	31/10/2012		Yes	No