

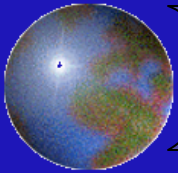
Prevention through education and persuasion – more of the same or new opportunities?

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Topics

- ❖ **What are the main impacts of several policy and regulatory interventions?**
- ❖ **What are the main impacts of alcohol education on drinking and damage?**
- ❖ **Why are education-based interventions so popular?**
- ❖ **What are several options for alcohol education?**



1. What are the main impacts of several policy and regulatory interventions?

Alcohol, No Ordinary Commodity: Research and Public Policy

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Cees Coos, Maristela Monteiro, Shakar Saxena, Maggie Brady, Therese Reitan, Jacek Moskoliwicz

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Prevention and Intervention Strategies Evaluated

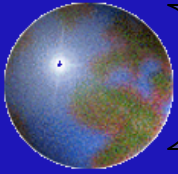
- ⊕ Regulating Physical Availability
- ⊕ Pricing and Taxation
- ⊕ Altering the Drinking Context
- ⊕ Education and Persuasion
- ⊕ Regulating Alcohol Promotion
- ⊕ Drinking-Driving Countermeasures
- ⊕ Treatment and Early Intervention

Ratings of 32 Policy-relevant Prevention Strategies and Interventions (Babor et al. 2003)

- ❖ Evidence of Effectiveness – the quality of scientific information: 0, +, ++, +++, (?)
- ❖ Breadth of Research Support– quantity and consistency of the evidence: 0, +, ++, +++, (?)
- ❖ Tested Across Cultures e.,g. countries, regions, subgroups: 0, +, ++, +++, (?)
- ❖ Cost to Implement and Sustain – monetary and other costs: low, moderate, high

Best Practices

- Minimum legal purchase age
- Government monopoly of retail sales
- Restriction on hours or days of sale
- Outlet density restrictions
- Alcohol taxes
- Sobriety check points
- Lowered BAC limits
- Administrative license suspension
- Graduated licensing for novice drivers
- Brief interventions for hazardous drinkers



2. What are the main impacts of education and persuasion on drinking and damage from alcohol?

Education and Persuasion

Strategy or Intervention	Effective-ness	Research Support	X-Cultural Testing	Cost	Target Group
Alcohol education in schools	O	+++	++	High	High Risk Group
College student education	O	+	+	High	High Risk Group
Public service messages	O	+++	++	Moderate	General Population
Warning labels	O	+	+	Low	General Population

Source: Babor et al. 2003

College and University Programs

- ❖ 18 of 42 studies were considered to illustrate some short-term impact (Lorimar & Cone, 2007)
- ❖ However, a number of limitations:
 - ❖ Small sample sizes, high attrition rates, lack of appropriate control group, short follow-up periods, randomization failures

College and University Programs

- Meta-analytical review of 62 studies, published between 1985-2007 (Carey et al. 2007)

- Limitations

- Number of studies available were too few to allow evaluation of some predictors
- Evaluation of the unique relationship of some predictors to the intervention effects was often not possible
- Small number of studies could not support multi-variate predictor models that would allow evaluation of independent contributions, or interactions among predictors

- Findings

- Individual-level alcohol interventions for college drinkers reduce alcohol use
- These interventions also reduce alcohol-related problems – with variations by sample and intervention characteristics
- The contrast between students who receive interventions and those in control conditions diminishes over time

College and University Programs

- ❖ Larimer and Croce (2007) offer several findings about the impact of specific intervention techniques
 - ❖ Strong support for Brief Motivational Interventions (BMI)
 - ❖ Campuses interested in implementing individual-focused prevention programs should consider BMI or skills-based programs, preferably incorporating Personalized Normative Feedback (PNF), BAC training, and protective behavioural strategies for risk reduction, as well as other personalized feedback components

Primary Prevention for Alcohol Misuse in Young People

Objectives:

1. To identify and summarize rigorous evaluation of psychosocial and educational interventions aimed at the primary prevention of alcohol misuse by young people.
2. To assess the effectiveness of primary prevention interventions over the longer-term (> 3 years)

Source: Foxcroft, Ireland, Lowe, Breen (2002) Cochrane review

Primary Prevention for Alcohol Misuse in Young People

600 papers/reports/dissertations were obtained and screened against inclusion criteria

1. Randomized controlled and non-randomized controlled and interrupted time series designs
2. Education and psychosocial primary prevention interventions for young people up to 25 years old
3. Alcohol-specific or generic (drugs; lifestyle) interventions providing alcohol outcomes reported
4. Alcohol outcomes: alcohol use, age of alcohol initiation, drinking 5+ on any one occasion, drunkenness, alcohol-related violence, alcohol-related crime, alcohol-related risky behaviour

56 studies included in the systematic review

Source: Foxcroft, Ireland, Lowe, Breen (2002) Cochrane review

Primary Prevention for Alcohol Misuse in Young People

- ❖ 20 showed evidence of ineffectiveness including DAPPER, DARE, AMPS, Multi-component Inoculation Programme, Project ALERT, RPPD, MPP, PASS, Stay SMART
- ❖ No firm conclusions were possible about the effectiveness of prevention interventions in the short and medium term
- ❖ Over the long term, Strengthening Families Programme showed promise & one study highlighted potential value of culturally skills training over the longer term
- ❖ Community interventions have potential benefits for youth and other sectors of the jurisdiction

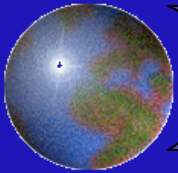
Alcohol Misuse Prevention for Young People: A Rapid Review of Recent Evidence

- 775 papers published from 1999 and June 2006
- Used inclusion criteria for the 2002 Cochrane review
- Which resulted in 23 included in the rapid review
- 3 showed increased alcohol consumption in the intervention group compared to the control
- 7 showed statistically significant positive effects but with a number of caveats:
 - Compromised by poor methods, high attrition, inappropriate analysis or small effect size
- 4 were highlighted: social marketing media-based intervention, and 3 Strengthening Families Program 10-14.

Source: D. Foxcroft (2006) WHO Technical Report

Interpretations

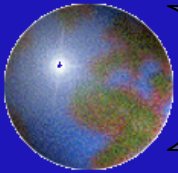
- ❖ ***Characteristics of those education interventions considered to be effective:***
 - ❖ Go beyond education and include community organizing or policy dimensions
 - ❖ Look very similar to brief interventions
 - ❖ Are targeted, intense and multi-dimensional
- ❖ ***Education in combination with other Interventions:***
 - ❖ A common claim is that this combination has greater potential than either alone
 - ❖ Social movement to control drinking and driving clearly involved a range of interventions, including education, but difficult to 'tease out' the potency or added value of education.
 - ❖ More evaluation and innovation is needed on this theme.



3. Why do education and persuasion interventions continue to be so popular?

Hypotheses: Popularity of Alcohol Education

- ❖ Voluntary and no immediate penalties for non-compliance
- ❖ Extensive funding - including from the alcohol industry
- ❖ Large work force with long-term investment
- ❖ Provides opportunity for entrepreneurs - patent interventions
- ❖ No negative impact or liability re political or commercial interests
- ❖ No organized or powerful interest opposing



4. What are some potential innovative roles for education and persuasion interventions?

Caveat -- While the roles noted below appear to have merit, most have not been evaluated in terms their impact on consumption or harm from drinking.

Potential roles of education

- raise awareness

- ❖ To advise consumers and potential consumers of damage from alcohol - e.g alcohol and cancer
- ❖ To raise awareness of the marketing and promotional measures used by the alcohol industry – particularly those that are attractive to adolescents

Potential roles for education - perspective

- ❖ To inform of the advantages of a population-based and environmental change approach
- ❖ To highlight the potential of various interventions in reducing drinking-related problems

Potential roles for education -- Foster debate & discussion

- ❖ To encourage debate about policies and a better understanding of the policy-making process
- ❖ To raise awareness of about how members of the public can influence alcohol policies in their community or state/province

Potential roles for education -- promote a policy rationale

- ✚ To offer a rationale for policy interventions that are under consideration or have been introduced

Potential roles for education -- supportive

- ⊕ As a supplement or complement for effective prevention strategies

Potential roles for education -- Inform policy makers

- ✦ To provide information to policy makers about global burden from alcohol and attendant costs, and impacts of interventions in reducing this burden

Potential roles for alcohol education

- ❖ Hypothesis: The main potential of education and persuasion techniques will be best realized by dramatic transformation of their foci, goals, targets and messages

Conclusion

- ❖ Can we afford both effective interventions and good intentions?
- ❖ “If all the good will, money and energy invested in alcohol education and persuasion strategies could be channeled into more effective interventions, perhaps our pessimistic and (for some) demoralizing conclusions about lack of effectiveness will have served a useful purpose.”

J. Rehm et al. 2006 *Addiction* v. 101, p. 453

Conclusion (2)

- ⊕ The global burden from alcohol is significant
- ⊕ In recent years the per capita consumption and high risk drinking have increased in some countries
- ⊕ We can therefore expect an increase in drinking-related damage

Conclusion (3)

- ❖ Human and economic resources to control the damage from alcohol are not limitless
- ❖ To offer ineffective but popular interventions as a primary or central response, is unwittingly contributing to the problem and not to its solution
- ❖ Drinkers, the general public and governments deserve interventions that are effective

Acknowledgement

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