Abstract

Health care settings are regularly accessed by individuals with problems related to heavy drinking. Research on interventions for reducing alcohol use, specifically brief motivational intervention, has demonstrated the utility of considering a patient’s readiness to change, as described by the Transtheoretical Model. Thus, it is important to identify predictors of readiness to change prior to intervention for reducing alcohol use in opportunistic settings. Participants were 593 injured patients from three urban Level I trauma centers screened positive for heavy drinking. Participants completed questionnaires that assessed demographics, alcohol use, alcohol-related consequences (Short Inventory of Problems +6 (SIP+6)), and readiness to change alcohol use (Readiness to Change Questionnaire- Treatment Version (RCQ-TV)). A multivariate analysis was conducted in which readiness to change (RTC; RTC score = action + contemplation – precontemplation) was simultaneously regressed on several predictor variables. In the multivariate model, SIP+6 scores (b = .448, SE = .546, p < .001), high risk drinking status (b = 3.700, SE = 1.70), and blood alcohol content (BAC) at time of injury (b = 6.539, SE = .085, p < .05) were statistically significant predictors of RTC. Results suggest several salient predictors of readiness to change prior to intervention. Given their increased readiness to change, injured patients without these characteristics may be more likely to benefit from brief intervention or brief intervention plus booster, whereas brief advice may be sufficient for injured patients with these characteristics when considering making a change in their drinking patterns.

Introduction

How much is too much?

Research has found alcohol abuse to be among the top 20 leading causes of premature death and disability in the United States. Alcohol use is the third preventable cause of death in the United States (Mokdad, Marks, Stroup, & Gerberding, 2004). The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) has defined heavy drinking as drinking five or more drinks on the same occasion on each of five or more days in the past 30 days (2015).

What’s the harm?

According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (2014), excessive consumption of alcohol led to approximately 88,000 deaths and significant economic costs, which were estimated at $249 billion in 2010. Furthermore, excessive consumption of alcohol has been associated with negative social consequences in a person’s life that may affect an individual’s

• Employment
• Finances
• Relationships (Mulia, Ye, Thomas, Greenfield, & Zemore, 2009).

How can you reduce the risk?

The use of brief interventions for alcohol misuse have been shown to be a useful preventative service (Solberg, Maciosek, & Edwards, 2008; Schmermer, Moyers, Miller, & Bloomfield, 2006). Past studies have shown the efficacy of brief interventions in the medical setting, including emergency departments and trauma care settings (Woolard, 2014; Woolard, 2015; Field, 2015; Thompson, 2017). This study was designed for non-treatment seeking patients. Readiness to change has been proposed as an important mechanism for treatment access for brief interventions targeting behavior change (Apodaca & Longabaugh, 2009; Heather, 2014).

Aim of Study

The primary aim of the present study was to identify predictors of readiness to change alcohol use among trauma center patients who screened positive for heavy drinking.

Method

Procedure

Participants were 593 patients (76.6% male) from three urban Level I trauma centers:

1. Baylor University Medical Center (BUMC; Dallas, TX)
2. Methodist (Dallas, TX)
3. University Medical Center Brackenridge (UMCB; Austin, TX).

We conducted a multivariate analysis in which readiness to change (RTC score = action + contemplation – precontemplation) was simultaneously regressed on only the predictors that were significantly correlated.

Results

Note: * p < .05; ** p < .01

Discussion

Results revealed that SIP+6 scores, high-risk drinking status (reference condition is low-risk status), and BAC at time of injury were statistically significant predictors of readiness to change. In conclusion, these findings suggest that patients who have experienced more alcohol-related consequences, meet high-risk drinking criteria, and have a higher BAC at time of injury have an increased readiness to reduce their drinking or abstain from alcohol. The characteristics identified are components of what makes the injury a sentinel event and possibly lead to behavior change. Thus, identifying these characteristics among emergency and trauma department patients can help inform the components of a brief intervention particular to the patient’s readiness to change.

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Acknowledgements

This study was funded by the National Institute of Health (NIH) R01AA015439. The content is solely the responsibility of the authors and does not necessarily represent the official views the NIH.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictors</th>
<th>b</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
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<th>p</th>
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<tr>
<td>BAC at Time of Injury</td>
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<td>3.077</td>
<td>2.085</td>
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<td>At-Risk Status</td>
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<td>0.036</td>
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<tr>
<td>Max. # of drinks per day</td>
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<td>0.043</td>
<td>0.376</td>
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<tr>
<td>No. of Days of Heavy Drinking</td>
<td>-0.024</td>
<td>0.023</td>
<td>-0.57</td>
<td>0.57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dependent Variable = RTC score

Adjusted R² = .396

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