Evaluation of e-CHUG Integrated Into Two Classroom-Based Alcohol Interventions

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AOD Initiatives

Abstract

An experiment was conducted to test the effectiveness of three interventions—alone and in combination—available to prevent college student alcohol abuse. The interventions were (1) CHOICES, a unique alcohol prevention education that employs interactive journaling and elements of the Alcohol Skills Training Program. (2) Alcohol 101 plus CD-ROM developed by the Center, and (3) e-CHUG, an online alcohol assessment/motivational enhancement feedback system developed at SDSU. A new program that combines CHOICES with e-CHUG was also tested within the context of a randomized sample of students at SDSU. The primary dependent variable was alcohol consumption on a four-week follow-up survey. The study was conducted in the presentation curriculum (either CHOICES or Alcohol 101 plus), the addition of e-CHUG significantly reduced reported consumption. The research is limited by the low response rates that were the result of student noncompliance and the SDSU’s campus closure due to fires during the research period.

Background

The current college alcohol research field has some solid epidemiological evidence. O’Malley and Johnston (2002) analyzed the five extant national data sources that measure alcohol and other drug use among college populations. This analysis showed that the prevalence of any alcohol use among college students is high (69.6% for last 30 days), with half of these drinkers being heavy (five or more drinks on an occasion) drinkers. O’Malley and Johnston (2002) found consistency across data sources, in terms of demographics: men drink more than females; white students drink more heavily than all other groups; students living in the north east high (69.6% for last 30 days), with half of these drinkers being heavy (five or more drinks on an occasion) drinkers. O’Malley and Johnston (2002) found consistency across data sources, in terms of demographics: men drink more than females; white students drink more heavily than all other groups; students living in the north east.

Curriculum

CHOICES: Alcohol Abuse Prevention and Harm Reduction Program

The CHOICES program was designed by the Change Companies in partnership with Drs. Alan Malat and George Parks of the Additive Behaviors Research Center at The University of Washington. This program uses a facilitator-led group process to guide students through information, reflective journaling, and group discussion to help students internalize risk reduction information and personalize the experience by “trying on” strategies to reduce their own risk. The program uses motivational, interactive, and problem-solving strategies and is presented in a 45-minute interactive session focusing on alcohol situations and a scenario discussing the consequences of driving under the influence. Students watch different video clips and as a group discuss the impact of drinking and its influence. Members of the Addictive Behaviors Research Center at The University of Washington performed a thorough review of studies. Perkins (2002) delineated several types of alcohol associates (2002) estimated that approximately 1400 college students drink more heavily than all other groups; students living in the north east high (69.6% for last 30 days), with half of these drinkers being heavy (five or more drinks on an occasion) drinkers. O’Malley and Johnston (2002) found consistency across data sources, in terms of demographics: men drink more than females; white students drink more heavily than all other groups; students living in the north east.

Alcohol 101 CD-ROM Presentation

Alcohol 101plus is an interactive alcohol education computer program developed by the Center as an add-on component of a classroom presentation using this program focusing on alcohol situations in the last 30 days. It is a party-dealing with alcohol, and a scenario discussing the consequences of driving under the influence. Students watch different video clips and as a group had an opportunity to make some choices for the main characters at certain key points during the presentation. Once a video clip had concluded, the facilitators used discussion questions to encourage students to reflect on their own views of alcohol, their drinking habits, and the choices they are presented with within any given situation.

The E-CHUG Intervention

The electronic Check-Up to Go is the web-based version of the Check-Up to Go (CHUG) mailed feedback instrument (Walters, 2000; Walters, Bennett & Miller, 2000). This assessment and feedback tool is derived from widely used Drinkers’ Check-Up format. The electronic Check-Up to Go (e-CHUG) combines a brief assessment with motivational feedback tailored to college students. The e-CHUG helps students understand their drinking patterns relative to other college students, and indicates specific risk factors. Further, the tool provides targeted information about how their drinking patterns affect their level of risk. This assessment and feedback is completed individually, using the internet.

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References


Socrates

There were no differences by condition on any of the three subscales of the SDSU’s campus closure due to fires during the research period.

Methods

A randomized trial was conducted through the SDSU’s freshman orientation class. The research intervention was voluntary, and all participants had an opportunity to make some choices for the main characters at certain key points during the presentation. Once a video clip had concluded, the facilitators used discussion questions to encourage students to reflect on their own views of alcohol, their drinking habits, and the choices they are presented with within any given situation.

Results

Though there were substantially different compliance rates by condition, there were no statistically significant or differences on any of the measures reported here at the pre-test. As such, unless otherwise stated pre-test measures were not included as covariates in the analysis because doing so would have diminished the sample size to a point where the condition that included pre-tests.

Drinks Per Hour (DPH)

A significant and substantial difference was observed on post-test DPH (see Figure). Regardless of curriculum, those in the E-CHUG condition reported fewer drinks, and fewer drinks per hour, F (1,109)=4.945, p<.01.

Pretest Effects

There were no significant effects on post-tests DPH or AUDIT from the presence or absence of a pretzet.

Post-test calculated Drinks Per Hour

There were no significant effects on post-tests DPH or AUDIT from the presence or absence of a pretzet.

Conclusions

Though this research fall short of the anticipated design, the remaining 28% factorial experiment that included two curriculums crossed with E-CHUG offer intriguing results. Clearly, the response rates call into question the effects reported, however, the lack of pre-test differences makes this less of a concern. However, we acknowledge the importance of replicating the findings presented here.

Alcohol consumption was markedly affected by the E-CHUG. Unfortunately, since a no-treatment control group was not retained within this study, the E-CHUG is offered here as a stand-alone intervention for this population. Instead, we acknowledge that E-CHUG in combination with either educational programs produces beneficial effects. Further, we cannot state whether or not CHOICES or Alcohol 101 plus have independent effects on alcohol consumption. Without knowing what non-treated students would have reported, we cannot address whether the results reported here represent any beneficial effect. Shortening the CHOICES curriculum to fit within the required timeframe may have also affected its impact.