



Effective Health Care Interventions in Primary Care to Reduce Alcohol Misuse Nomination Summary Document

Results of Topic Selection Process & Next Steps

- Screening, behavioral counseling, and pharmacologic interventions in the primary care setting to reduce alcohol misuse will go forward for refinement as a systematic review. The scope of this topic, including populations, interventions, comparators, and outcomes, will be further developed in the refinement phase.
- When key questions have been drafted, they will be posted on the AHRQ Web site and open for public comment. To sign up for notification when this and other Effective Health Care (EHC) Program topics are posted for public comment, please go to <http://effectivehealthcare.ahrq.gov/index.cfm/join-the-email-list/>.

Topic Description

Nominator: Government agency

Nomination Summary: The nominator presents a series of questions relating to the evidence for screening and behavioral counseling in primary care for alcohol misuse.

Staff-Generated PICOS

Population(s): US adult population with subgroups including adolescents, pregnant women, adults >65 years, racial/ethnic minority populations (e.g., Latinos, Native Americans, and African Americans)

Intervention(s): Screening, behavioral counseling, and combination of behavioral counseling and medication

Comparator(s): Different combinations, approaches, and modalities for the above interventions

Outcome(s): Alcohol-related morbidity and mortality, all-cause mortality, alcohol-related traffic incidences, adverse effects (e.g., anxiety and labeling), rates of alcohol misuse, sick days, sobriety, and other potential harms and benefits

Setting(s): Primary care

Key Questions from Nominator:

1. Is there direct evidence that the combination of screening and behavioral counseling interventions for alcohol misuse lead to reduced morbidity and/or mortality?
2. Is there evidence to support specific screening modalities for alcohol misuse in the general adult population, adolescents, pregnant women, racial/ethnic minority populations, or in seniors?
3. What are adverse effects associated with alcohol use screening and screening-

related assessment?

4. Do behavioral counseling interventions reduce alcohol misuse in the targeted subgroup populations (general adult population, pregnant women, adolescents, racial/ethnic minority groups, seniors)?
5. Is there evidence to support specific behavioral counseling approaches or modalities?
6. What health care system influences are present in effective screening and behavioral counseling interventions for alcohol misuse?
7. Are there other positive outcomes from behavioral counseling interventions to reduce alcohol misuse?
8. What are the adverse effects or harms associated with behavioral counseling interventions for alcohol misuse?

Considerations

- The topic meets all EHC Program selection criteria. (For more information, see <http://effectivehealthcare.ahrq.gov/index.cfm/submit-a-suggestion-for-research/how-are-research-topics-chosen/>.)
- Alcohol-related problems can cause significant morbidity and mortality. Early identification and secondary prevention of alcohol misuse through screening and brief interventions in the primary care setting is effective and advocated for; however, rates remain low and many patients do not seek help for these conditions. Unrecognized alcohol-related problems can complicate the assessment and treatment of other physical or mental health conditions.
- The United States Preventive Services Task Force wishes to update their guidelines on screening and behavioral counseling in the primary care setting for alcohol misuse. It appears new evidence is available to update previous reviews, including evidence on new tools such as combination therapy used by primary care providers to treat alcohol-related problems. Therefore, this topic will move forward as a new systematic review.