

Alcohol Interventions for Mandated College Students: A Meta-Analytic Review

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Background and Objectives

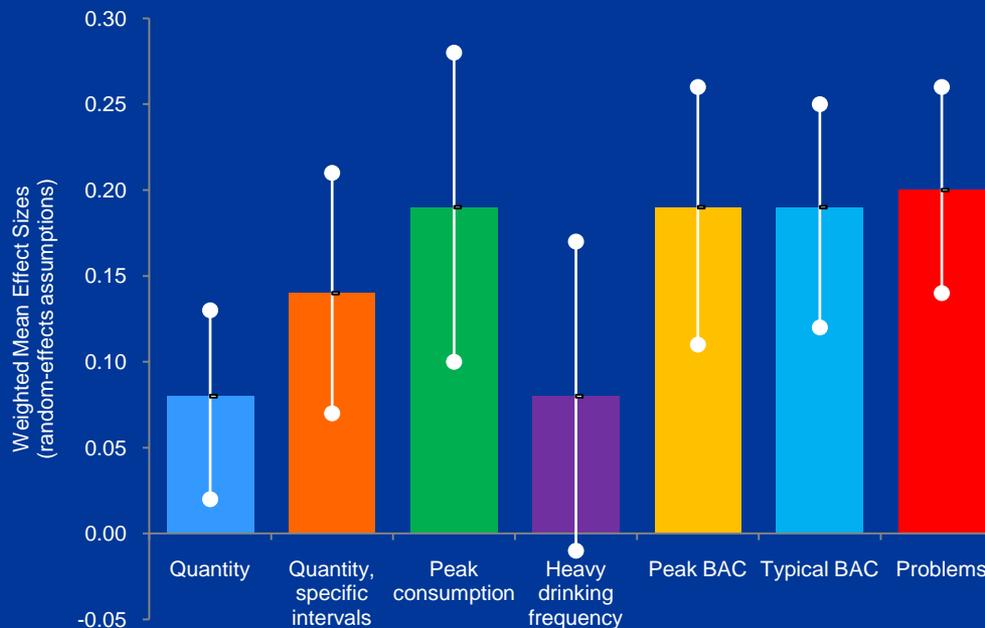
- More than half of the students attending college are under the minimal legal drinking age of 21 (ACHA, 2012) yet surveys of college-aged students indicate that more than 80% report having used alcohol (Johnson et al., 2011).
- Higher education institutions in the U.S. must establish and enforce alcohol-related policies, and alcohol education programs and behavioral interventions feature prominently in disciplinary sanctions.
- It is important to know if mandated interventions reduce consumption and negative consequences, and which interventions are the most efficacious.
- The purpose of this meta-analysis was to (a) identify efficacious interventions for mandated college students, and (b) determine if sample characteristics or intervention features influence outcomes.

Method

- Studies were retrieved from electronic databases (e.g., PubMed), reference sections of relevant papers, professional journals, and author responses to requests.
- Included Studies:
 - Available by December 2012
 - $k=30$ studies (69 separate interventions)
 - $N=8,498$ (M age = 19; 35% women; 84% White)
- Independent raters coded participant characteristics, design and methodological features, and intervention content.
- Weighted mean effect sizes (ES), using random-effects models, were calculated; positive ES indicated lower alcohol consumption and fewer alcohol-related problems.
- Potential moderators of intervention efficacy were assessed.

Results

Figure 1. Weighted mean effect sizes and 95% confidence intervals for the change in alcohol consumption and alcohol-related problems among mandated students.



- Several sample and intervention features moderated the efficacy of the intervention:
 - The quantity of drinking (at specific intervals), frequency of heavy drinking, and drinking days were reduced when studies delivered the intervention in a group vs. individually.
 - Quantity of drinking (overall and at specific intervals), frequency of heavy drinking, and peak BAC were reduced when the intervention was delivered face-to-face rather than via computer.

Conclusions

- Behavioral interventions for mandated students reduce alcohol use and alcohol-related problems.
- Our findings support the practice of offering evidence-based interventions to students who violate campus alcohol policy.