Adolescent Alcohol Misuse can nurses battle the binge?

A review of the effectiveness of brief interventions, including motivational interviewing, in the reduction of alcohol misuse and binge drinking amongst adolescents.

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Introduction
The number of Australian adolescents consuming risky levels of alcohol is increasing at an alarming rate, resulting in escalating hospital admissions due to alcohol related injury or disease. The Australian Federal Government is taking action on ‘the epidemic of binge drinking’ however it is important to identify and implement strategies at a local level. One possible strategy is the use of a brief intervention delivered by nurses in the acute clinical setting. Brief intervention is an action that can motivate a person to change a problem causing action. The aim of this review is to evaluate the effectiveness of brief interventions, including motivational interviewing, in reducing alcohol consumption and related harm, and to determine if these interventions could be used successfully by nurses in the acute clinical setting.

Findings
• No studies were conducted by nurses and only one study was undertaken in Australia
• No intervention designs were the same, confounding the findings
• Multiple motivational interviewing intervention sessions reported no significant reduction in alcohol misuse but found an increase in readiness to reduce alcohol intake
• The use of motivational interviewing appeared to reduce alcohol frequency and amount
• Motivational Interviewing led to reduction in binge drinking and reduction in harm minimisation over short term follow-up
• Trials with long term follow-up reported reductions in alcohol intake and harmful effects but also noted normal maturation reduced alcohol consumption and associated problems
• Trials using interventions other than motivational interviewing such as computer programs were ineffective for reducing alcohol misuse for adolescents

Conclusions and Recommendations for Clinical Practice and Research
Brief interventions have the potential to be used for good effect by nurses in the clinical setting. The most positive results were reported for face-to-face, one session, motivational interviewing style brief interventions, aimed at harm minimisation and using long-term follow-up. Interventions used by nurses in a clinical setting must be simple, quick and effective, and based on the best available evidence. Further Australian research is urgently needed to ensure recommendations are relevant to Australian adolescents and nurses in a clinical setting, so that we can begin to address the alarming social and financial cost of teenage binge drinking.

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References