



ORAL PRESENTATION

Open Access

Computer self-administered screening for substance use in a university health center: a feasibility pilot

Jennifer McNeely^{1*}, Ferschneider Marcy², J Allison Smith², Sleiter Luke¹, Ciotti Carlo², Leonard Noelle³

From INEBRIA 12th Congress,
Atlanta, GA, USA. 24-25 September 2015

Background

Unhealthy use of alcohol and drugs poses a significant health problem on college campuses, [1] and student health centers are an under-utilized resource for offering substance use screening and interventions. [2,3] As a strategy for increasing screening rates, we tested the feasibility of incorporating tablet computer self-administered screening into routine care at one university health clinic.

Materials and methods

During the 3-week study period, all patients presenting for a visit with a participating primary care provider were asked by the receptionist to fill out a 'health screener' in the clinic waiting area. Screening tools were the 4-item Substance Use Brief Screen (SUBS), [4] followed by the ASSIST for those who screened positive. [5] Patients gave informed consent and completed screening on a tablet computer, then viewed their results and were given the option of delivering this information to the medical provider.

Results

Half of the patients presenting for an appointment received the tablet, of which 337 (90%) consented and completed screening. Rates of past-year unhealthy use were 73% for alcohol, 43% for illicit drugs, and 8% for prescription drugs. Among participants who screened positive for alcohol, 45 (21%) had moderate-risk use, and 4 (2%) had high-risk use, based on ASSIST scores. Of those screening positive for drugs, 53 (35%) had

moderate-risk use, and one had high-risk use. Overall, 49% of all participants elected to disclose results to their primary care provider. Rates of disclosure were significantly lower for those with moderate-high risk drug or alcohol use (31%) than in those with low-risk use (59%), ($P<0.01$).

Conclusions

Our findings suggest that university health centers are a good venue for substance use screening and interventions, but there is also a need for interventions that can be delivered outside the health center, or that increase patient motivation to discuss substance use during the primary care visit.

Acknowledgements

This research was funded by the Center for Drug Use and HIV Research (P30 DA011041).

Authors' details

¹Department of Population Health, NYU School of Medicine, New York, NY, 10016, USA. ²Student Health Center, New York University, New York, NY, 10003, USA. ³Center on Drug Use and HIV Research and NYU College of Nursing, New York, NY, 10010, USA.

Published: 24 September 2015

References

1. Hingson R, Heeren T, Winter M, Wechsler H: Magnitude of alcohol-related mortality and morbidity among U.S. college students ages 18-24: changes from 1998 to 2001. *Annu Rev Public Health* 2005, **26**:259-79.
2. Nelson TF, Toomey TL, Lenk KM, Erickson DJ, Winters KC: Implementation of NIAAA College Drinking Task Force recommendations: how are colleges doing 6 years later? *Alcohol Clin Exp Res* 2010, **34**(10):1687-93.
3. Foote J, Wilkens C, Vavagiakis P: A national survey of alcohol screening and referral in college health centers. *J Am Coll Health* 2004, **52**(4):149-57.
4. McNeely J, et al: A brief patient self-administered substance use screening tool for primary care: two-site validation study of the Substance Use Brief Screen (SUBS). *Am J Med* 2015.

* Correspondence: jennifer.mcneely@nyumc.org

¹Department of Population Health, NYU School of Medicine, New York, NY, 10016, USA

Full list of author information is available at the end of the article

5. McNeely J, et al: Test-retest reliability of a self-administered Alcohol, Smoking and Substance Involvement Screening Test (ASSIST) in primary care patients. *J Subst Abuse Treat* 2014, **10**(14):00025-7.

doi:10.1186/1940-0640-10-S2-O23

Cite this article as: McNeely et al.: Computer self-administered screening for substance use in a university health center: a feasibility pilot. *Addiction Science & Clinical Practice* 2015 **10**(Suppl 2):O23.

**Submit your next manuscript to BioMed Central
and take full advantage of:**

- Convenient online submission
- Thorough peer review
- No space constraints or color figure charges
- Immediate publication on acceptance
- Inclusion in PubMed, CAS, Scopus and Google Scholar
- Research which is freely available for redistribution

Submit your manuscript at
www.biomedcentral.com/submit

