



Alcohol ▲ Concern

ALCOHOL CONCERN is the national agency on alcohol misuse, working to reduce the level of alcohol misuse and to develop the range and quality of helping services available to problem drinkers and their families. We are England's primary source of information and comment on a wide range of alcohol-related matters.

The Alcohol Concern Information and Communications Team provide a range of services and products including: producing the quarterly Magazine, Straight Talk, managing the website, and collating and interpreting the latest research in order to produce factsheets. The team also provides an e-based Information Service and maintains a specialist collection of alcohol related literature.

To access the Information Service

Email:
info@alcoholconcern.org.uk

Alcohol Concern
64 Lemon Street
London E1 8EU
Tel: 020 7264 0510
Fax: 020 7488 9213
Website:
www.alcoholconcern.org.uk

ALCOHOL CONCERN

Putting Brief Interventions into Practice

Factsheet SUMMARY

- This factsheet examines five screening and brief interventions programmes currently in use looking at the various methods employed and identifying common difficulties and pointers for success.
- There is a strong evidence base for the efficacy of brief interventions but they have yet to be implemented throughout PCTs. Government health policy supports the implementation of early identification and brief advice programmes
- It is estimated that heavy drinkers who receive a brief intervention are twice as likely to moderate their drinking in six to 12 months after the intervention as heavy drinkers who receive no intervention.
- The number needed to treat (NNT) for brief interventions in Public Health Care settings is estimated at 8 – ie approximately 8 patients would need to receive a brief intervention in order for one patient to reduce their drinking below recommended levels. This compares with an NNT of 20 for advice on smoking cessation.
- Primary care is an ideal setting in which to offer brief interventions as 20% of patients presenting to primary care are likely to be hazardous or harmful drinkers. This means on average each GP will see 364 excessive drinkers a year.
- Other health care settings such as A&E departments and general hospital wards are also ideal settings in which to offer brief interventions as a large proportion of people attending these services will have alcohol related problems.

This is a summary of the detailed factsheet which follows.
Factsheets on other topics are also available.

Factsheet revised
June 2001