

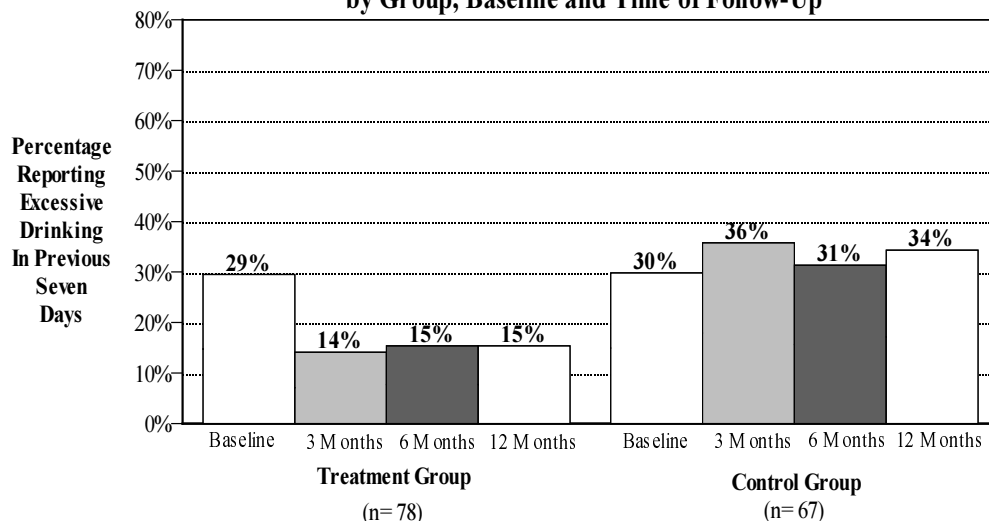
A Weekly FAX from the Center for Substance Abuse Research

University of Maryland, College Park

Brief Physician Advice Decreases Excessive Drinking by Older Adults

A study that “provides the first direct evidence that brief physician advice can decrease alcohol use by older adults in community-based primary care practices” has just been published. (Fleming et al, 1999) The research procedures and measures were similar to those used in Medical Research Council trial and Project TrEAT. The intervention included a workbook with feedback on the patient’s health behaviors, a review of problem-drinking prevalence, reasons for drinking, adverse effects of alcohol, a drinking agreement in the form of a prescription, two 10- to 15- minute visits, and a follow-up phone call from the clinic nurse two weeks after each visit. Adults age 65 and older who were randomly assigned to receive the intervention, experienced marked reductions in excessive drinking, compared to the control group.*

Percentage of Older Adults Drinking Excessively in the Previous 7 Days, by Group, Baseline and Time of Follow-Up



*Excessive drinking was defined as more than 20 drinks per week for men and more than 13 drinks per week for women.

NOTE: Some of the results could have been caused by the treatment group’s reduced willingness to admit that they drank excessively after they received intervention.

SOURCE: Adapted by CESAR from data from Fleming, M., Baier, L., Lawton Barry, K., Adams, W., & Stauffacher, E.A., “Brief Physician Advice for Alcohol Problems in Older Adults: A Randomized Community-Based Trial,” *The Journal of Family Practice*, 48(5), 378-384.

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