A patient centered approach in screening for alcohol problems

Sven Wåhlin
Riddargatan1
Beroendecentrum
Stockholm

twitter: @SvenWahlin
mail: sven.wahlin@sll.se

Studentlitteratur.se/kampanj MH14141
Alcohol is a dear friend – we must present good reasons to change
The motives for change varies; You need different approaches

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<td>Harmful use</td>
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First step:
Be attentive to alcohol

1: Awareness of a risk or a problem
  - Give advice
  - Offer Self help material
  - Offer Health check alcohol
  max 15 min

2: Assessment
  Health check alcohol
  30 min

3: Treatment
  - Drugs
  - Psychological
  - Self help material
  15 min/visit
Fishing: Suddenly it bites

Use the proper lure!
Raising the issue in 4 ways:

Different situations require different approaches
= Situation adapted screening

1. Ask about consumption
2. Ask about the patient’s own thoughts on alcohol
3. Offer AUDIT test
4. Discuss relation of alcohol and health problem
1. Asking about consumption:

Be systematic: Do you drink? -> How often? -> What? -> How much each time?

Tools:

• Health behaviour questionnaire
• Alcohol diary until revisit
• TLFB
2. Asking about the patient’s own thoughts on alcohol:

- ”Do you sometimes have thoughts on cutting down?”
- ”Have you sometimes thought if less alcohol would help your health problem”
- ”You're very health conscious in terms of exercise. Have you thought about reducing your drinking as well?”
3. AUDIT in opportunistic screening

- All hypertensions, sick leave >1 month, ....
- Alc important, but no good interiew
4. Discuss relation of alcohol and health problem

= a patient centered approach

1. Ask if the patient has noticed a connection

2. Inform how alcohol can affect
   - Discuss individual sensitivity

3. Inform about all treatment options incl. less alcohol

4. Liver enzymes high, even if within normal range
Inform in dialogue (MI)

- **Explore:**
  - What do you know about alcohol and XX?
  - Do you know what you can do yourself ...?
- **Offer** (ask for permission):
  - Do you want me to tell you some more about ...?
- **Explore:**
  - What do you think about this?
  - Could this be relevant to you?
Does your drinking make a difference? “the halving experiment”

Person centered vs Statistics centered

- **Background**: The individual sensitivity to alcohol varies greatly – in every organ system

- **Offer a test**: Drink half (or less) during 4 weeks. Evaluate at a revisit
The two effects of paying attention to alcohol

1. **We understand** the situation better – and can intervene (BI or referral)

2. **More important:** The patient’s understanding:
   - Alcohol can be important to my health!
   - This doctor knows something about alcohol
There are many ways to screen – the ones that take place are the best!

Ask the practitioners what is helpful