

The Drink-less Program

Dr Elizabeth Proude¹ (Presenter)

Biography

Dr Elizabeth Proude BA (Auck) MA PhD (Syd) is Project Co-ordinator for the Drink-less project, based at University of Sydney and Royal Prince Alfred Hospital. She first trained as a teacher, took an 8-year excursion into the theatre and worked with well-known future Oscar winners, but changed disciplines to public health medicine in 1992. She has 10 years of experience in general practice research and obtained her PhD in the prevention of HIV/AIDS & STDs. Previous roles include Project Manager, Australian Study for Health & Relationships, and Research Officer, NESB General Practitioner Training & Development Project (Multicultural HIV/AIDS Education & Support Service). She is a member of the Ethics Committee of FPA Health.

Abstract

As part of the Interlock scheme, the RTA decided to incorporate a brief medical assessment for offenders. The 'Drink-less' package was selected as a tool for doctors in providing this assessment and intervention. The original 1993 'Drink-less' package needed revision in line with new NHMRC (2001) guidelines for responsible drinking and the components required updating. GPs were involved in the assessment and testing of the new package, and sessions were held with the co-operation of Divisions of General Practice to make the RTA scheme known, to give GPs training in the identification and treatment of alcohol problems in general practice, and to supply them with the new Drink-less resources.

The Drink-less package is based on World Health Organization validated techniques. It identifies alcohol consumption problems using the WHO AUDIT 10-item questionnaire; three questions cover quantity and frequency, three questions are about alcohol dependence, and four are about problems caused by alcohol. An accompanying scoring template gives information on how to interpret results, and a visual aid (handy card) assists the health worker to employ a 5-10 minute intervention. The patient receives a self help take-home booklet based on the above information.

The RTA contributed all expenses incurred in the revision, re-design and printing of materials and in training GPs in the new Drink-less and the Interlock scheme.

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