

eScreen – Internet based screening and brief intervention for alcohol and drug related problems

Anne H. Berman, PhD¹, Kristina Sinadinovic, PhD student¹, Peter Wennberg, PhD¹, Dan Hasson, PhD^{2,3}
1. Dept of Clinical Neuroscience, Karolinska Institutet, 2. Department of Physiology and Pharmacology, Karolinska Institutet, 3. Stress Research Institute, Stockholm University

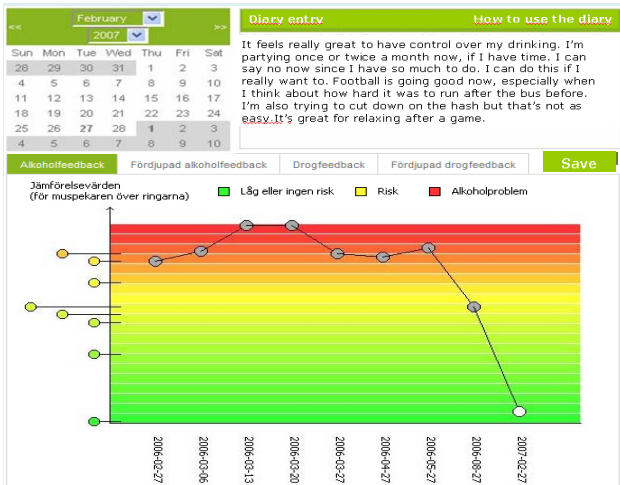


Figure 1: Graphical personalized feedback over a one year period for an eScreen user with alcohol-related problems, including an entry in the personal electronic diary.

Conclusions

Internet screening for alcohol and drug problems seems to appeal to people with harmful alcohol and drug use. Key features make eScreen a unique web-based service in Sweden and internationally:

- Individualized feedback, accommodated to both adolescent and adult needs;
- The possibility of following one's own alcohol and drug consumption over time;
- An electronic diary for personal thoughts related to alcohol and drugs.'

Low cost combined with the potential to reach many people could make Internet-based screening services a cost-efficient self-help tool as well as a complement for patients in treatment for substance abuse.

Introduction

As the Internet is virtually a universal phenomenon, influencing alcohol and drug behaviors via an Internet-based service is a natural next step.

eScreen (www.escreen.se) is a new Swedish website, providing repeated self-screening for alcohol- and drug-related problems via the AUDIT [1] and DUDIT [2] questionnaires, both recommended by the Swedish National Board of Health and Welfare for identifying alcohol and drug problems.

Method

Self-screening via eScreen is anonymous and free of charge and generates personal user feedback as well as treatment recommendations. Users of the service can also see how their alcohol and drug consumption compares to different age groups in the Swedish population.

In-depth self-report is possible using the Alcohol-E [3] and DUDIT-E [4], questionnaires that increase awareness about the role of alcohol and drugs in the user's life. Site users can follow their progress over time in diagrams showing personal risk level as well as by writing in a personal electronic diary.

eScreen was developed in cooperation with the Stockholm Centre for Dependency Disorders and the user organization UngaKRIS, which targets high risk adolescents and young adults who have stopped using drugs and engaging in criminality.

References

- [1] Saunders, J. B., Aasland, O. G., Babor, T. F., De La Fuente, J. R., & Grant, M. (1993).
- [2] Berman, A. H., Bergman, H., Palmstierna, T., & Schlyter, F. (2005).
- [3] Berman, A. H., Palmstierna, T., Bergman, H., & Sundberg, B. (2004).
- [4] Berman, A. H., Palmstierna, T., Källmén, H., & Bergman, H. (2007).
- [5] Sinadinovic, K., Berman, A. H., Hasson, D. & Wennberg, P. (2010).
- [6] Sinadinovic, K., Berman, A. H. & Wennberg, P. (2010).

Results

Of a total of 1846 individuals screened for alcohol-related problems in the first 20 months, 36% meet AUDIT criteria for hazardous drinking, 11% showed harmful alcohol consumption and 20% probable dependency. No significant differences were found in the proportions for men's and women's problematic drinking [5]. In a 2008 random sample from the general population in Sweden, 18% showed hazardous drinking while 2% showed harmful drinking and 1% probable dependency [6].

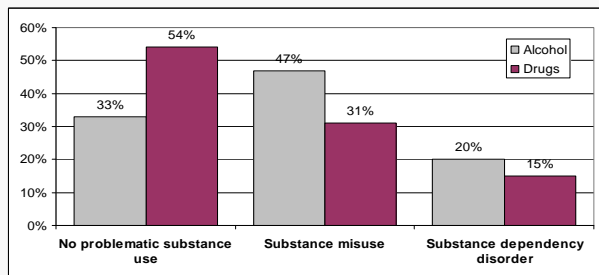


Figure 2: Hazardous and harmful use of alcohol and drugs among 1846 eScreen users logging in over a 20-month period

Of 1211 individuals screened for drug-related problems, 46% showed harmful use of drugs according to the DUDIT (45% of men and 47% of women). While 28% of the men and 34% of the women showed misuse of drugs, 18% of the men and 13% of the women showed probable dependence on drugs [5]. Harmful drug use in the general population was 1.8% for men and 3.8% for women in an internet study conducted in 2008 [6].

In the next three years eScreen will be studied in I) a random population sample; the effects of the service will be evaluated in II) a randomized controlled trial and III) a randomized trial among eight police districts in the Stockholm metropolitan area.

Contact:

Anne H Berman, PhD
Licensed psychologist & psychotherapist
Karolinska Institutet
Dept of Clinical Neuroscience
Center for Psychiatric Research
Box 4044
S-141 04 Huddinge
Sweden

E-mail: anne.h.berman@ki.se
Telefon: +46 8 607 1526
Fax: +46 8 711 7141
Website: ki.se/berman



Karolinska
Institutet