

Brief alcohol intervention for risky drinking in young people aged 14–15 years in secondary schools: the SIPS JR-HIGH RCT

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Plain English summary

The SIPS JR-HIGH RCT

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Plain English summary

This study assessed the impact and cost of a brief counselling intervention at reducing risky alcohol use in young people aged 14–15 years. Young people in 30 secondary schools across London, Kent, north-west England and north-east England completed a survey to identify risky drinking. Young people who were assessed as risky drinkers were placed at random into one of two groups. The control group received a healthy lifestyles information leaflet. The other group received a 30-minute brief alcohol counselling session plus an alcohol information leaflet. All advice or counselling was delivered by learning mentors, who are school support staff, in private sessions with individual young people. One year later, the young people's alcohol consumption was measured using the same survey and the Timeline Follow-Back questionnaire, and compared between the two groups to see if there was any difference. School staff, parents and young people were also interviewed to gather their views about the study. There was no difference in the level of alcohol use between the two groups at 1 year, although many students in both groups reported drinking less over time. During the interviews, young people, staff and parents felt that fewer young people in general were drinking alcohol, but that brief counselling could be useful for if/when they did, and school seemed a sensible setting to receive this advice. The results of this study showed no evidence that this brief counselling for risky drinking for young people aged 14–15 years in the secondary school setting is effective at reducing drinking and drinking-related harm.

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