



BACK TO BASICS

A Research Brief from Georgia's Brief Assessment, Screening, Intervention and Continuum of Care System¹
June 2011

Does a brief intervention work to reduce drinking and drug use... *for everyone?*

Introduction and Rationale: Screening, brief intervention, and referral for treatment (SBIRT) programs like Georgia BASICS are designed to identify alcohol and drug abuse problems among patients seeking healthcare in a hospital setting and reduce those patients' drinking and drug use up to and beyond six months after their hospital visit. Other treatment interventions have shown that some *individual characteristics* may influence intervention effectiveness. Since our program is targeted toward all patients entering Grady Health System or Medical Center of Central Georgia emergency departments (a diverse population!), we wanted to know if it helps some patients more than others, based on individual characteristics.

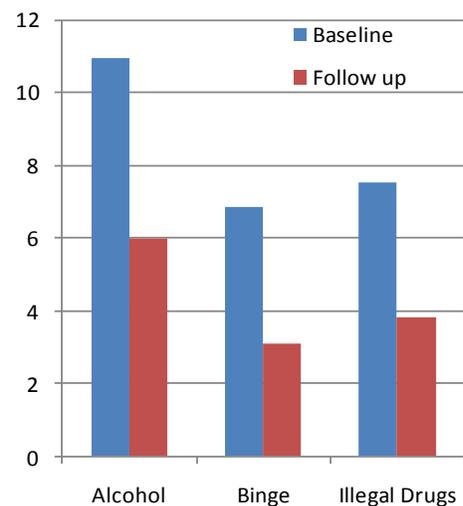
Method:

- Patients who entered the emergency departments at the two medical centers were assessed for past 30 day frequency of days binge drinking, using any alcohol, or using illegal drugs. These patients were interviewed six months later again about their alcohol and drug use. Comparisons were made between intake (baseline) and six month (follow up) frequencies of usage. The effects of individual characteristics—including substance abuse risk level, gender, race, and age—on six month outcomes were explored.

Results:

- Regardless of individual characteristics (i.e., race, gender, risk level, and age), patients' frequency of days binge drinking, using any alcohol, and using illegal drugs significantly reduced post-brief intervention.
- Older patients reduced their days using illegal drugs more than younger patients such that for each 10 years of age (e.g., from 25 to 35 years old), a patient would be expected to report one day fewer of using in the past 30 days at follow up.
- **Note:** No matter how high a patient's risk level was upon entry to the ED, he/she reduced their drinking/drug use days (on average) as much as patients' with lower risk levels!!

**Number of Days in Past 30 Using Substances:
From Baseline to Follow Up**



Conclusions:

- Our results highlight: (1) the overall effectiveness of the Georgia BASICS program in reducing risky substance abuse and (2) its ability to affect *all* participants, regardless of the individual characteristics we examined.

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