



Quality Enhancement Research Initiative

Management of Alcohol Misuse

Substance Use Disorders-QUERI Update

February 2008

About 20% of VA primary care patients screen positive for alcohol misuse, which ranges from drinking above recommended limits without problems (risky drinking) to severe alcohol use disorders (alcohol dependence). Most patients with alcohol misuse engage in risky drinking or have mild problems due to drinking. Randomized controlled trials have shown that brief alcohol counseling from primary care providers decreases alcohol consumption, and can improve health outcomes and decrease health care use among patients with risky drinking. However, despite the strong evidence base, no large healthcare system has been successful at implementing these practices into routine care.

Alcohol Misuse Work Group

The Alcohol Misuse Work Group (AMWG) of the Substance Use Disorders Quality Enhancement Research Initiative (SUD-QUERI) is working with clinical partners in the VA to implement evidence-based management of alcohol misuse nationwide.

Goals of the SUD-QUERI Alcohol Misuse Work Group:

- Implement and support ongoing evaluation and improvement of evidence-based annual screening for alcohol misuse among VA primary care patients nationwide. After implementation of the AUDIT-C (Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test), a brief alcohol screen in 2004, ongoing evaluation and feedback are aimed at improving the quality of alcohol screening
- Implement evidence-based annual brief alcohol counseling for all VA primary care patients with alcohol misuse. Initial efforts focused on development and testing of a clinical reminder for brief alcohol counseling (2004-2006). Current work is aimed at evaluating implementation through a transformational performance measure for brief alcohol counseling and dissemination of a clinical reminder.
- Implement effective systems to assist patients who have severe alcohol misuse. Current efforts are aimed at developing systems of individualized, stepped-care for this high-risk

subgroup of veterans with alcohol misuse.

- Develop and implement electronic systems to monitor quality of care for patients with alcohol misuse nationwide. Collaboration in the development and evaluation of performance measures of brief alcohol counseling is an essential element of the AMWG's ongoing work.
- Address cross-cutting issues, such as smoking, depression, and PTSD through collaborations with other SUD-QUERI investigators and QUERI groups, as well as other VA stakeholders. AMWG is collaborating with other SUD-QUERI work groups and other QUERI Centers to address important issues.

Members of the SUD-QUERI Alcohol Misuse Work Group include: Carol Achtmeyer, ARNP; Kristen Barry, PhD; Katharine Bradley, MD (Group Leader and SUD-QUERI Co-Clinical Coordinator); Joseph Conigliaro, MD; Stephen Dobscha, MD; John Finney, PhD; Peter Friedmann, MD; Gwen Greiner, MPH, MSW; Alex Harris, PhD; Eric Hawkins, PhD; Daniel Kivlahan, PhD (SUD-QUERI Clinical Coordinator); JoAnn Kirchner, MD; Steve Maisto, PhD; David Oslin, MD; Scott Sherman, MD; Emily Williams, MPH; and Ken Weingardt, PhD.

How Do I Learn More?

If you are interested in implementing evidence-based management for alcohol misuse in the VA, the SUD-QUERI offers educational and implementation tools at the following website:

<http://center.puget-sound.med.va.gov/sites/hsrd/alcoholmisuse/default.aspx>

If you have difficulty accessing this site, please contact

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For more information about the SUD-QUERI Alcohol Misuse Work Group, contact:

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Web Resources

For more information about the QUERI program in general, visit the national QUERI website at

www.hsrdr.research.va.gov/research/queri

Access QUERI's "Guide for Implementing Evidence-Based Clinical Practice and Conducting Implementation Research," at:

<http://www.hsrdr.research.va.gov/queri/implementation>

SUD-QUERI Executive Committee

Each QUERI Executive Committee is co-chaired by a research expert and a clinician. The research coordinator for SUD-QUERI is **Thomas Kosten, MD**, and the clinical coordinator is **Daniel Kivlahan, PhD**. The Executive Committee includes other experts in the field of substance use disorders: Paul Barnett, PhD; Thomas Berger, PhD; **Katharine Bradley, MD** (Co-Clinical Coordinator); Mr. Anthony Catapano; Geoff Curran, PhD; John Finney, PhD (Research Coordinator Emeritus); **Hildi Hagedorn, PhD** (Implementation Research Coordinator); Kim Hamlett-Berry, PhD; Kathy Henderson, MD; Keith Humphreys, PhD; Joseph Liberto, MD; Rudolf Moos, PhD; Jon Morgenstern, PhD; Lisa Najavits, PhD; Mark Shelhorse, MD; Scott Sherman, MD; and Mark Willenbring, MD.