

INTERNET-BASED SCREENING AND INTERVENTION FOR ALCOHOL- AND DRUG- RELATED PROBLEMS

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Background: Swedish accommodation to EU-policy has weakened state control over the alcohol supply as well as increased the inflow of drugs. Limiting alcohol and drug consumption must thus occur through reducing demand. As the Internet is virtually a universal phenomenon, influencing alcohol and drug behaviors via an Internet-based service is therefore a natural next step. A new Swedish website for self-screening via the AUDIT- and DUDIT-questionnaires is eScreen (www.escreen.se).

Method: Self-screening via eScreen generates user feedback and treatment recommendations. In-depth self-report is possible using the Alcohol-E and DUDIT-E. Site users can follow their progress over time in diagrams showing personal risk level as well as by writing a personal electronic diary.

Results: During the first 18 months, 2492 user-accounts were registered, evenly distributed between genders. With regard to selection bias, approximately 65% of adult site users over 18 report harmful alcohol consumption, compared to 63% of female and 51% of male adolescent users. Screening suggests that 11% of female and 16% of male adult users are dependent on illicit drugs; for adolescents the rates are virtually identical. These results will be compared to rates from an ongoing general Swedish population study.

Conclusions: Internet-screening for alcohol and drug problems appeals to people with harmful alcohol and drug use. Low cost combined with the potential to reach many people could make Internet-based self-help services a cost-efficient self-help tool as well as a complement for patients in treatment for substance abuse.