

## **Is self-efficacy tied to better motivational interview outcomes in an urgent care setting?**

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**Background:** Self efficacy is a measure of one's own ability to complete tasks and goals. Building self-efficacy is one of the main principles of Motivational Interviewing and is believed to lead to better treatment outcomes (Sampson et al, 2010; Miller and Rollnick, 2002). Using data from the Georgia BASICS program, this study examines the association between patients' reports of self efficacy to reduce their alcohol use and reductions in drinking six months following a brief intervention for risky alcohol use.

**Methods:** The sample comprised of individuals who received treatment at Emergency Departments at Medical Center of Central Georgia and Grady Memorial Hospital and scored as at risk on the Alcohol, Smoking and Substance Involvement Screening Test (ASSIST). The sample comprised of approximately 1150 patients, 37.8 percent of whom were women and 74.2 percent of whom were Black. Their self-efficacy to stop using alcohol was compared with their treatment outcomes for alcohol abuse risk, measured through the tally of alcohol ASSIST scores.

**Results:** Clients who reported high self-efficacy at intake did not have lower alcohol abuse risk at the follow up six months later. Their reduction in alcohol abuse risk was comparable to those who reported very low self-efficacy. Clients who reported, moderate but not the highest self-efficacy had the greatest reduction in alcohol abuse risk. Unexpectedly, patients who reported reductions in self-efficacy between intake and follow up reported better alcohol abuse outcomes than patients who reported higher self-efficacy at follow up.

**Discussion:** The results imply that self-efficacy has a positive correlation with risk for alcohol abuse. But there are multiple other plausible explanations. For example, Demmel, Nicolai, and Jenko (2006) argued that self-reported measures of self-efficacy are often unreliable because of positive response bias. It is also possible that the effects of motivational interviewing are most visible within the first few weeks (Rollnick and Miller, 2002). Thus, six months could be too late for the effects of the interview to be measured.