



An online learning resource for healthcare and social care professionals working to reduce alcohol-related harm



This document provides a brief summary of the Alcohol Identification and Brief Advice (Alcohol IBA) project, developed by e-Learning for Healthcare (e-LfH) in association with the Department of Health in England. Alcohol IBA supports the renewed national alcohol strategy "Safe. Sensible. Social."

According to national studies, 1 in 3 men and 1 in 6 women are drinking at levels which pose risks to their health. Women who regularly drink over 6 units a day and men who regularly drink over 8 units a day are at the highest risk of such alcohol-related harm. For these drinkers risk of hypertension, for instance, increases fourfold for men and doubles for women. Risk of stroke is doubled for the men and increased fourfold for women.

Analysis of 56 controlled trials over a 30 year period shows that early, brief advice (5 minutes) can be effective in helping one in eight increasing risk or higher risk drinkers to reduce their consumption if given by a trained practitioner.

These short interventions provide information to patients and use motivational techniques to help patients to make positive healthy choices about their alcohol use. The evidence also shows that this brief advice is as effective with non-dependent drinkers as longer or multi-session interventions.

The overall goal of Alcohol IBA is to enable the learner to 'employ techniques to help individuals adopt sensible drinking behaviour' as set out in competence AH10 of the Drugs and Alcohol National Occupational Standards (DANOS).

The e-learning provides education on the number of units involved in alcoholic drinks, reflecting the imagery and wording of public media campaigns. It also shows how to use the various identification tools derived from the World Health Organisation validated Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test (AUDIT) to identify patients' levels of risk.

The five e-learning sessions cover:

- Alcohol Facts
- Looking at Brief Advice
- Tools for identifying alcohol misuse
- Clinical approach - Case Studies with videos of standard IBA
- Practising brief advice
- Assessment and record of achievement

The programme's focus is on neither the dependent drinker, nor trying to make people stop drinking completely, but targeting the people who regularly drink at levels which incur health risks, possibly without realising it.

The learning is initially targeted at practitioners in primary care, however it is available to all healthcare professionals via the website www.alcohollearningcentre.org.uk Alcohol IBA will also be available via the e-LfH LMS and the National LMS by summer 2010.

For more information please go to www.alcohollearningcentre.org.uk/eLearning/IBA or visit www.e-lfh.org.uk/projects/alcohol