

Healthy Recovery: Results and reflections from a stepped wedge randomized controlled trial of a healthy lifestyle intervention within substance dependence treatment

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Introduction

- Cardiovascular disease and cancer are leading causes of mortality for people with a history of alcohol or other substance use disorders.
- Smoking and other unhealthy lifestyle behaviours are the primary behavioural risk factors that contribute to the development of these diseases.
- There is the potential for substance abuse treatment services to also address smoking.
- Healthy Recovery is an 8-session group-based intervention that primarily targets smoking, but also addresses diet and physical inactivity as part of a healthy lifestyle approach.

Study design

- The study was conducted as a stepped wedge RCT across residential substance abuse treatment programs provided by the Australian Salvation Army (Sydney, Canberra, Central Coast)
- The primary outcome was the number of cigarettes smoked each day.
- Secondary outcomes included abstinence, use of NRT and self efficacy



Participants

Average age = 38 years
72% alcohol attending treatment for alcohol problems
All smokers
76% of participants were willing to participate in the study



Healthy Recovery

- 8 session group based program, delivered over 5-weeks
- Designed for people who smoke and have other forms of substance dependence
- Focus on smoking reduction, increasing fruit and vegetable intake and increasing physical activity
- The program includes education, group based motivational interviewing, goal setting & monitoring, contingency management and promotes the use of NRT

Results

- Participants completing Healthy Recovery had a significantly lower rate of cigarettes smoked per day at 2 months follow-up than people in the control group (p=0.001).
- At 8 months there was still a difference between the two groups, although it was marginal (p=0.05).
- Participants completing Healthy Recovery also demonstrated greater increases in intake of fruit and vegetables, compared to treatment as usual
- No between group differences for physical activity.

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Table 1: Average daily cigarettes smoked across the study period

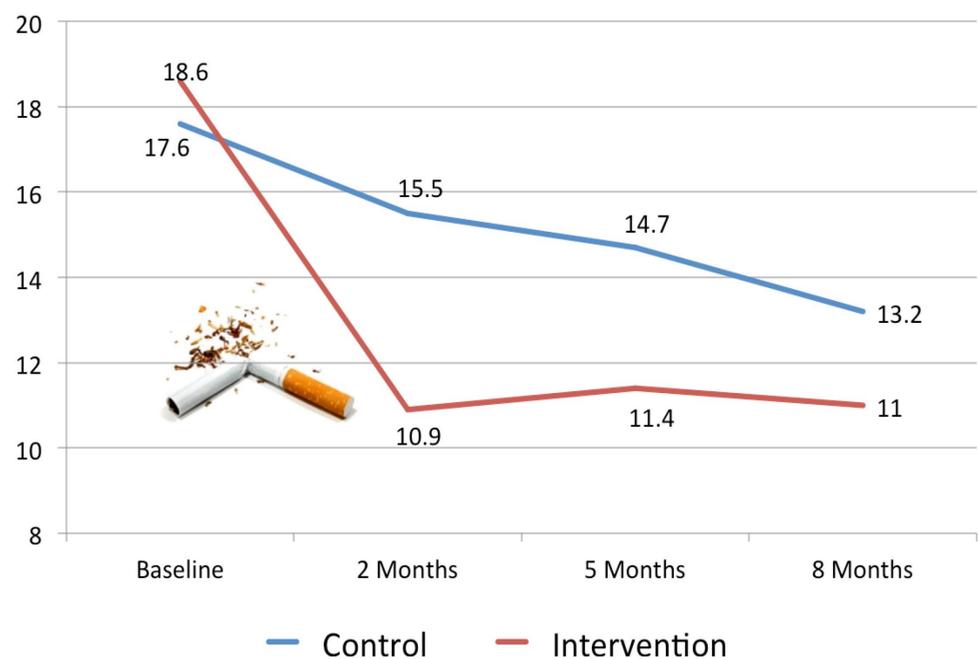


Table 2: Quit rates at follow-up

	2-months	5-months	8-months
Healthy Recovery	18%	12%	15%
Treatment as usual	2%	6%	8%
P-value	.14	.36	.30

Table 3: Use of nicotine replacement therapy at follow-up

	2-months	5-months	8-months
Healthy Recovery	60%	45%	29%
Treatment as usual	21%	19%	26%
P-value	.001*	.04*	.69

Conclusions

- People attending substance abuse treatment are willing to engage in healthy lifestyle interventions.
- Interventions focusing on increasing individual's self-efficacy to quit smoking during substance abuse treatment may lead to reductions in smoking.
- Future research should examine the implementation of Healthy Recovery within tobacco-free residential treatment.