

SCREENING AND BRIEF INTERVENTIONS FOR REDUCING ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION IN A DEPARTMENT OF FIREFIGHTERS IN THE CENTRAL REGION OF PORTUGAL

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BACKGROUND

It is known that additive behaviors and dependencies in the workplace are a significant problem with consequences on the health of workers, their safety and absenteeism and productivity (approximately 40% of work-related accidents are related to alcohol consumption). The consumption of alcoholic beverages in the workplace is not only boosted by unemployment and job insecurity, but also by intense work, unregulated hours, stress and depression. The profession of firefighter is classified as of high risk, since firemen are constantly subject to stressful situations that cause high levels of tension and emotional exhaustion (Castro, Cleto, & Silva, 2011). It is essential to develop efforts to assess and treat alcohol consumption problems among firefighters. Brief interventions (BIs) are developed according to the risk level identified by the AUDIT (Alcohol Use Disorder Test) and they are based on the motivational approach (Babor, Higgins-Biddle, Saunders, & Monteiro, 2001; Rosa, Abreu, & Barroso, 2015). Nurses play a key role in the identification and development of interventions for individuals with unhealthy alcohol use.

OBJECTIVE

To assess the lifestyle behaviors, such as alcohol and other psychoactive substances consumption, and develop interventions based on identified risk levels.

METHODOLOGY

The study was carried out in a department of firefighters in the central region of Portugal. Individual interviews were performed in December of 2018, duly authorized and confidentiality and anonymity of all participants was kept. The data collection instrument used was a questionnaire which integrates questions related to health and health behaviors such as alcohol use (Alcohol Use Disorders Test - AUDIT), tobacco and other psychoactive substances, eating, exercise, sleeping habits and stress management.

RESULTS

Of the 29 interviewees, 2 were female and 27 were male. The sample had a mean age of 45.7 years, 93.1% lived with their family and in relation to schooling, the majority of the workers (41.4%) completed the 12th year. Concerning the consumption of psychoactive substances, in relation to tobacco, 5 people (17.2%) smoke. Of these, two smoke 1 to 4 cigarettes a day, a person smokes between 5 to 10 cigarettes a day, a person smokes more than 10 cigarettes a day and a person smokes about 1 cigarette a month. Concerning the scores obtained with the AUDIT instrument, 96.6% of the participants presented a low-risk alcohol consumption, and educational counseling was conducted. Only one of the participants (3.4%) presented risky alcohol consumption and simple advice was given.



CONCLUSION

All of the firefighters accepted the screening and brief interventions and would like to participate on follow-up. Education interventions and brief counseling were developed based on the risk level. The firefighters were receptive to the interventions and made them think about their lifestyles, verbalizing their health needs.

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