

# Primary care physician's own AUDIT-score as a predictor for their use of brief alcohol intervention

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**Background** To define whether the AUDIT-scores of primary health care (PHC) physicians predict their willingness to use brief alcohol intervention (BI).

**Methods** Cross-sectional self-administered questionnaire survey to all 3193 physicians providing PHC in Finland. The response rate was 1909 (59.8%). Odds ratios (OR) from multinomial regression analysis were calculated for self-reported frequency (never, occasionally or regularly) of conducting BIs by physicians with AUDIT-scores of  $\leq 7$  or  $\geq 8$ .

**Results** The prevalence of heavy drinkers based on AUDIT-score ( $\geq 8$ ) was 14.5% among all physicians, 7.0% among females and 27.0% among males. Of the respondents 9.4% reported doing BI regularly and 50.0% occasionally. AUDIT-scores did not predict either regular or occasional use of BI (Table). Instead, several other independent predictors for higher use of BI were found. These included having a specialist license in general practice or occupational health care, years of experience as PHC physicians and the location of the practice, but not gender or age (Table). The OR for regular activity among the physicians with AUDIT-score  $\geq 11$  was 0.36 (95% CI 0.14-0.94), but this subgroup was too small to draw definite conclusion.

**Conclusions** The study indicates that heavy drinking by PHC physicians does not explain the general low frequency with which BI is used.

**Table.** Adjusted odds ratios (OR) for PHC physicians providing brief interventions regularly and occasionally. Reference category was physicians with no activity (n=776). OR was adjusted for all other variables.

	Regular activity (n=179) OR (95% CI)	Occasional activity (n=954) OR (95% CI)
<b>Gender</b>		
Female	1.00	1.00
Male	0.77 (0.53-1.13)	1.24 (1.00-1.54)
<b>Age, yrs</b>		
$\leq 30$	1.00	1.00
31-40	2.46 (0.93-6.49)	1.49 (0.94-2.38)
41-50	2.23 (0.73-6.80)	1.24 (0.71-2.16)
$\geq 51$	2.38 (0.71-7.98)	1.13 (0.60-2.13)
<b>Province of practice</b>		
Northern Finland	1.00	1.00
Eastern Finland	1.07 (0.53-2.15)	1.60 (1.09-2.35)
Western Finland	1.23 (0.71-2.14)	1.37 (1.00-1.88)
Southern Finland	1.69 (0.97-2.94)	1.72 (1.25-2.37)
<b>Practice location</b>		
Countryside	1.00	1.00
Cities without medical faculty	0.87 (0.56-1.36)	1.04 (0.81-1.34)
Cities with medical faculty	1.44 (0.92-2.26)	1.35 (1.03-1.76)
<b>Experience as a physician, yrs</b>		
$\leq 5$	1.00	1.00
6-10	0.93 (0.38-2.24)	0.87 (0.54-1.41)
11-20	0.74 (0.27-2.03)	0.76 (0.44-1.33)
$\geq 21$	1.45 (0.48-4.43)	1.01 (0.54-1.89)
<b>Experience as a PHC physician, yrs</b>		
$\leq 5$	1.00	1.00
6-10	1.25 (0.63-2.48)	1.23 (0.82-1.82)
$\geq 11$	1.24 (0.56-2.78)	1.66 (1.04-2.66)
<b>Specialist licence in general practice or occupational health care</b>		
No	1.00	1.00
Yes	1.95 (1.33-2.86)	1.42 (1.13-1.79)
<b>AUDIT-score</b>		
0-7	1.00	1.00
$\geq 8$	0.76 (0.44-1.29)	0.86 (0.64-1.14)