

# Ultra-brief intervention for problem drinkers

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# Rationale for study

- ◆ Educational initiatives for problem drinking in the general population have little or no impact
- ◆ Brief interventions have demonstrated impact
- ◆ Can we modify a brief intervention into an educational format and demonstrate impact on drinking?

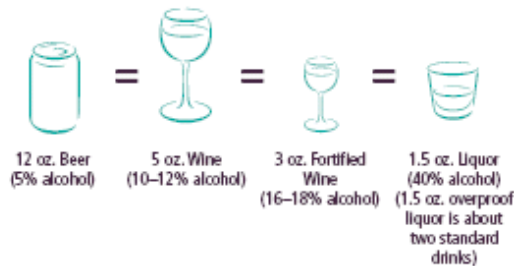
# 1 What was your drinking like during a typical week in the past year?

List roughly how many drinks you have on each day of a typical week and add up the total:

Monday	_____
Tuesday	_____
Wednesday	_____
Thursday	_____
Friday	_____
Saturday	_____
Sunday	_____
<b>TOTAL</b>	_____

Be sure to estimate the number of "standard" drinks you usually have (it is important when you compare your drinking to other Canadians). Each of the drinks on the chart below have the same amount of alcohol in them and will all affect you in the same way.

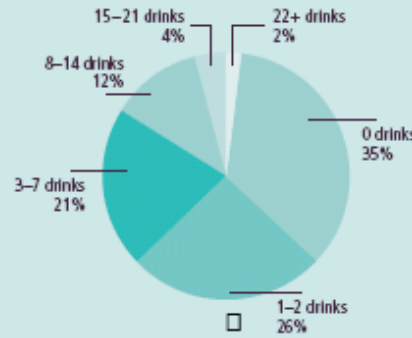
### One standard drink is:



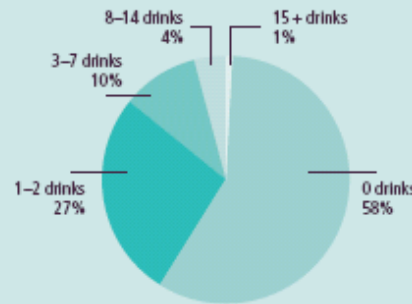
# 2 Now compare your weekly total to that of other Canadians

How does your weekly average compare? Look at the pie charts below to find where your drinking fits with the rest of the adult population. For example, if you are a male who drinks 15 standard drinks per week, you drink more alcohol than 90 per cent of other men in Canada do.

## Drinks per week Men



## Drinks per week Women

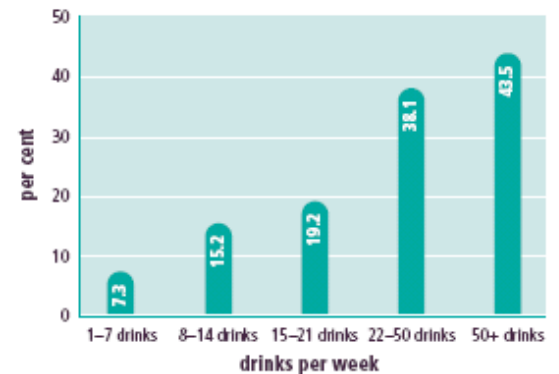


# 3 Risky drinking

A recent national survey looked at how much people drank in a week and how their drinking was affecting different areas of their lives. People were asked about their physical health, outlook on life, friends/social life, relationships with their spouses or partners and children, home life, financial position and work or studies. Not surprisingly, the results showed that the more people drank in a week, the greater the chance that the drinking was affecting more and more areas of their lives.

How likely are you to have problems as a result of your drinking? Look at the chart below to see where you fit.

### Chance of negative consequences related to number of drinks per week



# Preliminary Studies

- ◆ Post-test only study with 1-month follow-up found 2 drinks per week reduction from sending pamphlets to households ( $p < .06$ )
- ◆ Pamphlet sent directly to problem drinkers interested in self-help materials lead to reduction in drinks/drinking day at 6-month follow-up

# Full intervention trial

# Why is it needed?

- ◆ Set up implementation to mimic public health initiative
- ◆ Recruit people who are not interested in help seeking
- ◆ Examine mechanisms of change
- ◆ Is it the normative feedback or just receiving a pamphlet?

# Study Design

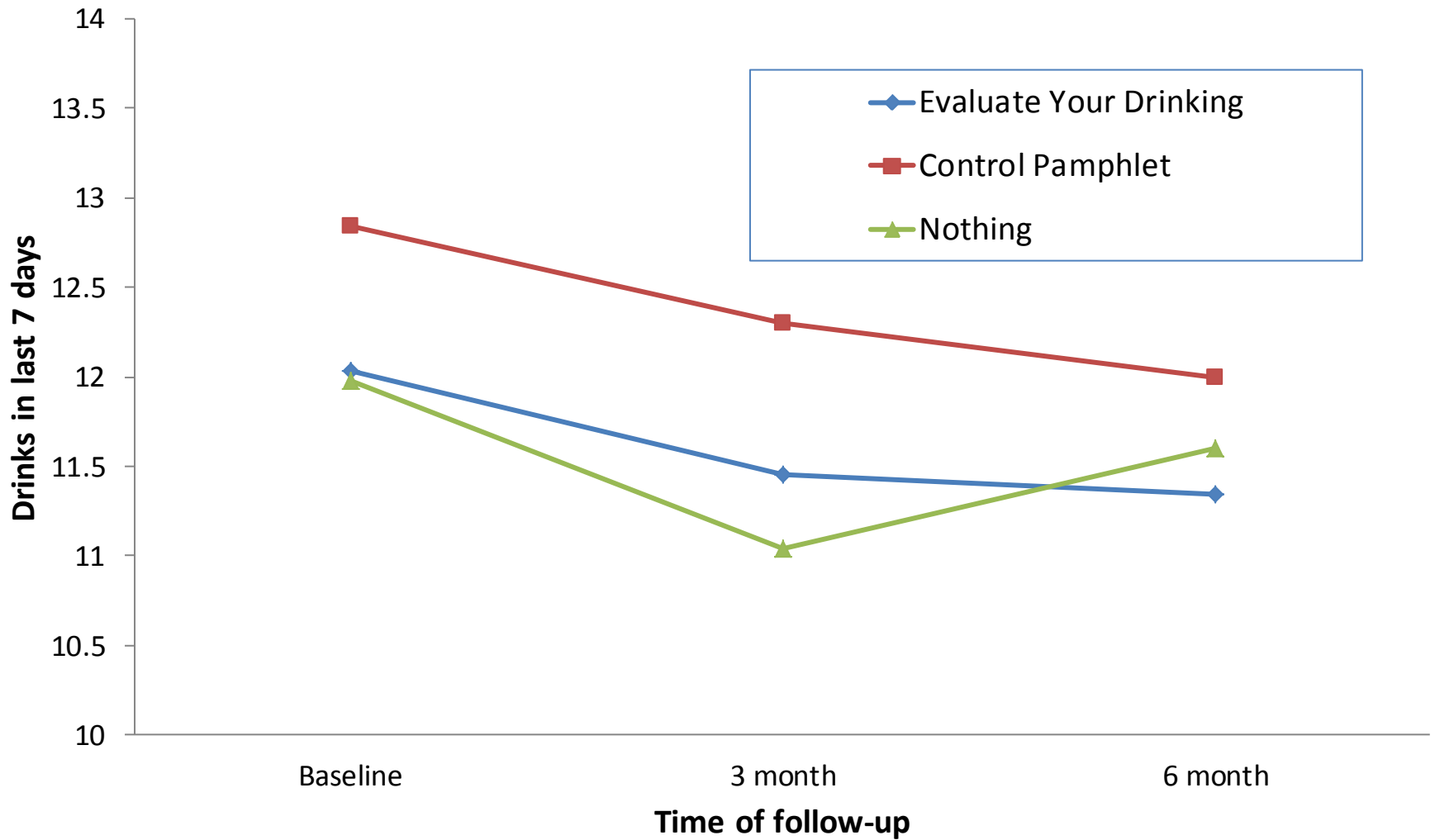
- ◆ 14,009 weekly drinkers contacted in RDD telephone survey
- ◆ Identify problem drinkers (AUDIT  $\geq$  8)
  - N = 2,757
- ◆ Recruit for 3- and 6-month follow-ups
  - N = 1,767
- ◆ Randomly assigned to intervention pamphlet, control pamphlet, or nothing
- ◆ Follow-up: 3-month = 86%; 6-month = 76%

## Explanation provided to participants

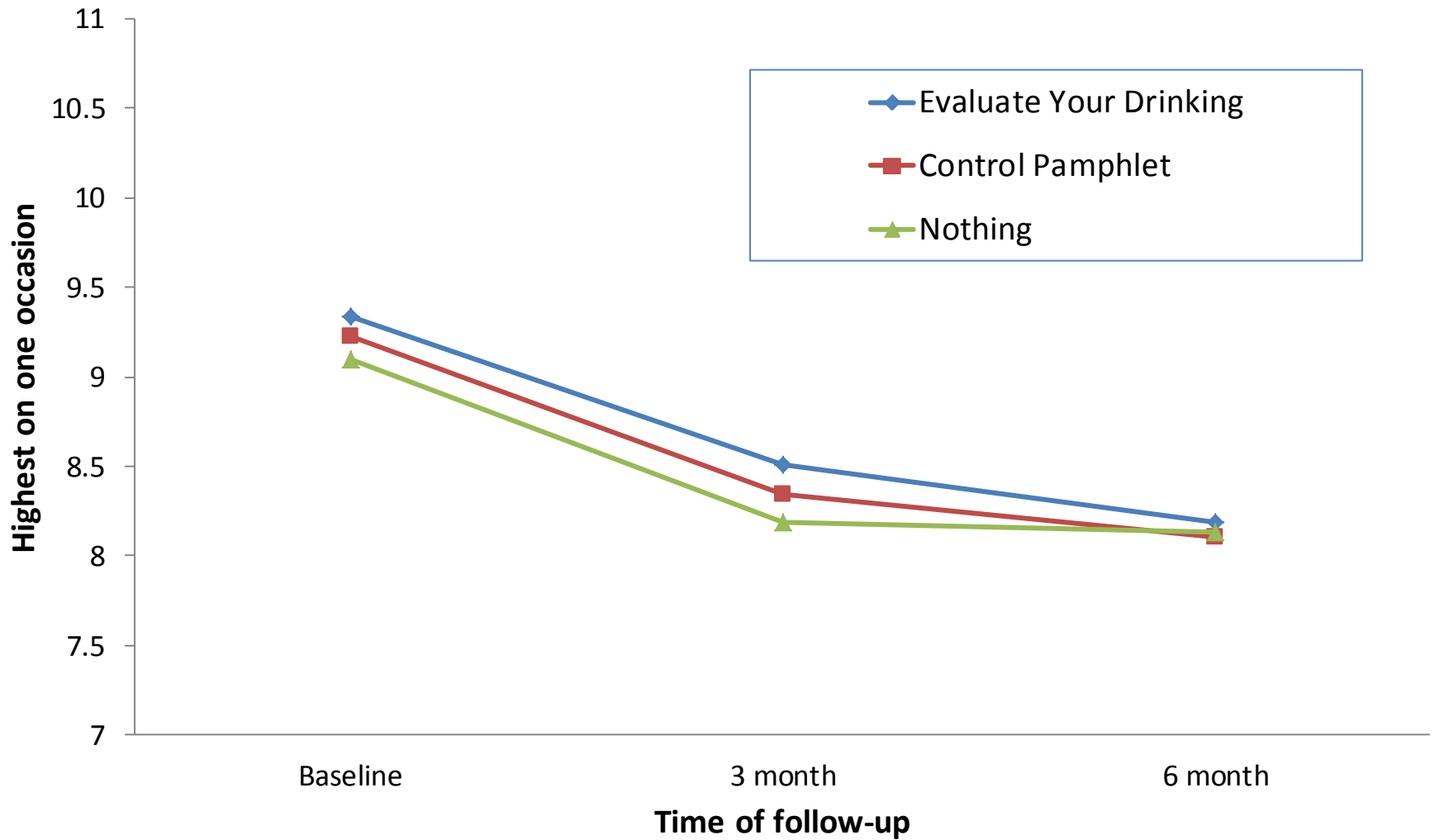
“The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health is in the process of mailing a safe-drinking pamphlet to some households in Toronto. I do not know if this pamphlet is being sent to your household, but if you do see it, the six-month follow-up survey will ask about your impressions of the materials.”



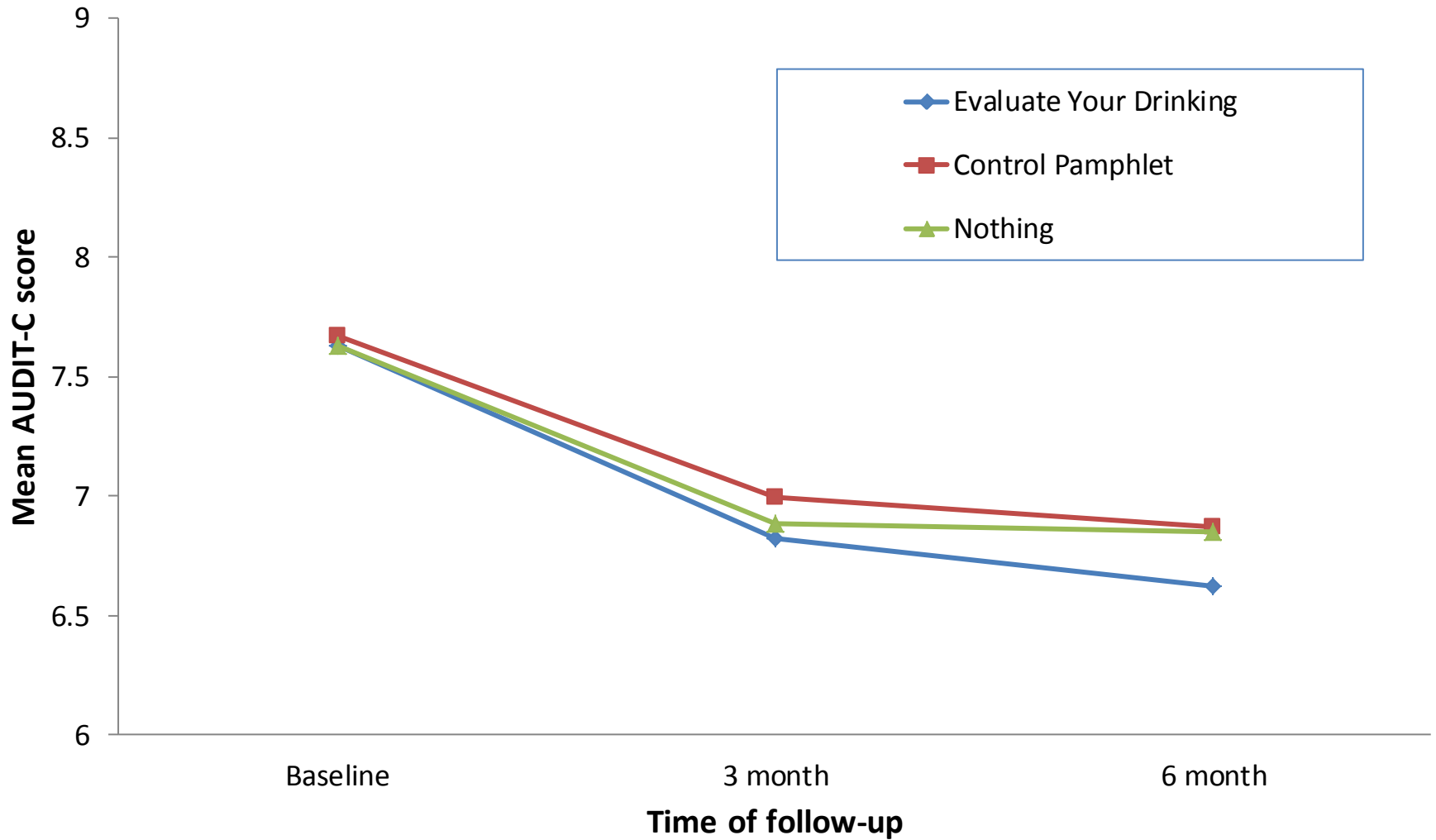
## Drinks in last 7 days



## Highest on one occasion



## AUDIT-C scores



Evaluate Your Drinking versus Nothing;  $p < .04$

# Preliminary Conclusion

- ◆ Small effect of Evaluate Your Drinking Pamphlet in one of three outcome variables
  - Mediator, Moderator, and ITT analyses still to be conducted
- ◆ Tentative support that a brief intervention, modified to an ultra-brief, public health format can have an impact

# References

- ◆ Cunningham, J. A., Wild, T. C., Bondy, S. J., & Lin, E. (2001). Impact of normative feedback on problem drinkers: A small-area population study. *Journal of Studies on Alcohol, 62*, 228-233.
- ◆ Wild, T. C., Cunningham, J. A., & Roberts, A. B. (2007). Controlled study of brief personalized assessment-feedback for drinkers interested in self-help. *Addiction, 102*(2), 241-250.
- ◆ Cunningham, J. A., Neighbors, C., Wild, C., & Humphreys, K. (2008). Ultra-brief intervention for problem drinkers: research protocol. *BMC Public Health, 8*, 298.

# Collaborators and Funding

## ◆ Collaborators:

Keith Humphreys, Clayton Neighbors,  
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