

READINESS TO CHANGE, CONFIDENCE IN ABILITY TO CHANGE, AND SEVERITY OF UNHEALTHY ALCOHOL USE AMONG PRIMARY CARE PATIENTS RECRUITED TO A TRIAL OF COLLABORATIVE CARE



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BACKGROUND and AIM

- ❖ Readiness to change drinking has been associated with greater severity of unhealthy alcohol use, but not with later reductions in drinking, while confidence in ability to change has been associated with less severity and increased likelihood of later reductions in drinking.
- ❖ We describe these two dimensions of readiness and their association with DSM-5 alcohol use disorder (AUD) severity in a sample of primary care patients recruited to a trial of collaborative care designed to engage patients with alcohol use disorders (AUDs).

METHODS

Data Source and Sample:

- ❖ Participants ≥ 21 years were recruited from one of 3 primary care clinics affiliated with a single VA medical center who: 1) screened positive for unhealthy alcohol use (AUDIT-C ≥ 3 for women, ≥ 4 for men), 2) were not in alcohol treatment and 3) reported frequent heavy drinking at phone outreach (≥ 4 drinks/day women; ≥ 5 drinks/day men twice weekly or once weekly if they had previously been treated for AUD).
- ❖ Participants completed structured in-person baseline interviews using validated measures.

Measures:

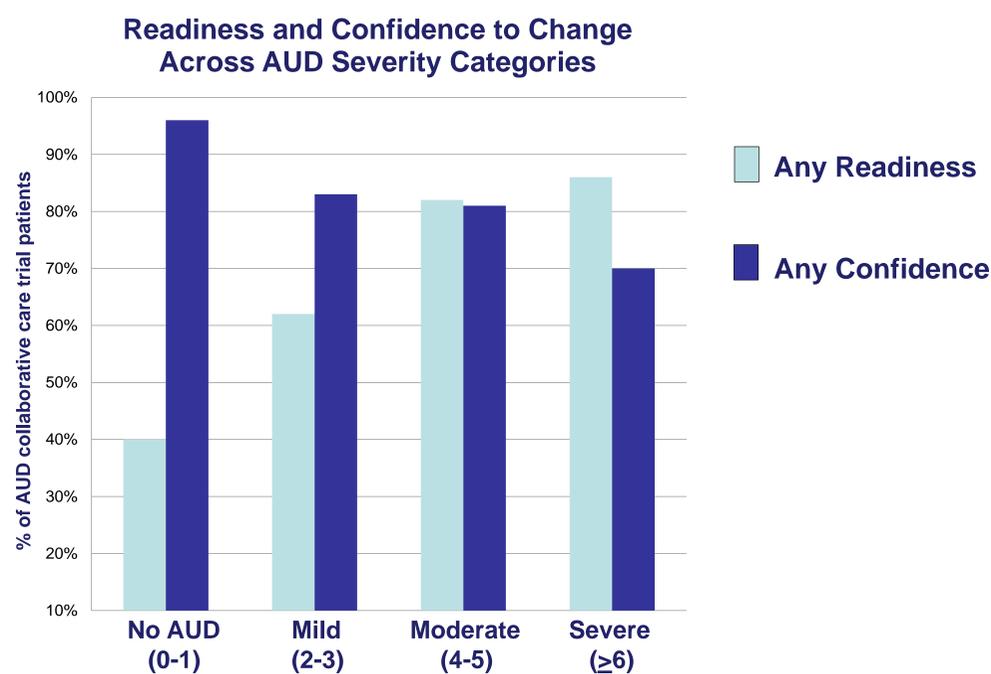
- ❖ Scaled continuous baseline measures of readiness and confidence were dichotomized into any versus no readiness and confidence, respectively.
- ❖ Presence and severity of DSM-5 AUD was measured by the number of endorsed symptoms, which were categorized into no AUD, and mild, moderate, and severe AUD symptoms (0-1, 2-3, 4-5, and ≥ 6 of the 11 criteria, respectively).

Analyses:

- ❖ Chi-square tests of independence were used to compare any readiness and any confidence across DSM-5 Alcohol Use Disorder (AUD) severity categories.

RESULTS

- ❖ Among 210 eligible patients recruited to date (of 300 target for trial), 151 (72%) reported any readiness and 168 (80%) reported any confidence.
- ❖ The prevalence of DSM-5 AUD was 88% (n=185).
 - ❖ 12% (n=25) of patients with no AUD
 - ❖ 31% (n=65) of patients with mild AUD
 - ❖ 27% (n=57) of patients with moderate AUD
 - ❖ 30% (n=63) of patients with severe AUD
- ❖ Readiness increased across groups based on severity of DSM-5 AUD (test for trend $p < 0.001$) while confidence decreased (test for trend $p = 0.005$) (see figure).



CONCLUSIONS

- ❖ In this population of patients, most of whom met criteria for moderate to severe AUD, readiness to change drinking and confidence in ability to change were common and associated with severity of AUD.
- ❖ Consistent with previous research, readiness increased but confidence decreased as severity of AUD increased.
- ❖ Future research is needed to assess whether readiness and confidence predict changes in drinking in these patients.

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