Background and Objectives

- More than half of the students attending college are under the minimal legal drinking age of 21 (ACHA, 2012) yet surveys of college-aged students indicate that more than 80% report having used alcohol (Johnson et al., 2011).

- Higher education institutions in the U.S. must establish and enforce alcohol-related policies, and alcohol education programs and behavioral interventions feature prominently in disciplinary sanctions.

- It is important to know if mandated interventions reduce consumption and negative consequences, and which interventions are the most efficacious.

- The purpose of this meta-analysis was to (a) identify efficacious interventions for mandated college students, and (b) determine if sample characteristics or intervention features influence outcomes.

Method

- Studies were retrieved from electronic databases (e.g., PubMed), reference sections of relevant papers, professional journals, and author responses to requests.

- Included Studies: Available by December 2012
  - \( k = 30 \) studies (69 separate interventions)
  - \( N = 8,498 \) (M age = 19; 35% women; 84% White)

- Independent raters coded participant characteristics, design and methodological features, and intervention content.

- Weighted mean effect sizes (ES), using random-effects models, were calculated; positive ES indicated lower alcohol consumption and fewer alcohol-related problems.

- Potential moderators of intervention efficacy were assessed.

Results

Figure 1. Weighted mean effect sizes and 95% confidence intervals for the change in alcohol consumption and alcohol-related problems among mandated students.

- Several sample and intervention features moderated the efficacy of the intervention:
  - The quantity of drinking (at specific intervals), frequency of heavy drinking, and drinking days were reduced when studies delivered the intervention in a group vs. individually.
  - Quantity of drinking (overall and at specific intervals), frequency of heavy drinking, and peak BAC were reduced when the intervention was delivered face-to-face rather than via computer.

Conclusions

- Behavioral interventions for mandated students reduce alcohol use and alcohol-related problems.
- Our findings support the practice of offering evidence-based interventions to students who violate campus alcohol policy.