Drink in Check – Tackling on-campus drinking cultures

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Introduction / Issues: Young university students consume alcohol at more hazardous levels than other young adults. Approximately half of Australian students who drink, consume more than five alcoholic drinks on most occasions when they are drinking, often several times a week.

Method / Approach: ATODA worked with three ACT universities to develop the Drink in Check Project, which aims to build capacity among student leaders and relevant staff to provide alcohol screening using the Alcohol Use Disorders Inventory Test (AUDIT) and to give feedback and advice to reduce alcohol-related harm among their university peers.

ATODA developed a half day training program which covered comprehensive information about alcohol, and built skills in the delivery of the AUDIT screening tool and brief interventions (BI). Student leaders were recruited through the universities and asked to administer a minimum of five AUDITs/BI.

Key Findings: Fifty-nine student leaders and staff completed the Drink in Check training and 60% of attendees administered five or more AUDITs/BI s to their peers. Pre-test training scores averaged 45% and post test scores 85%. Satisfaction with the training program was high.

Between November 2021 and April 2022, 217 AUDITs and brief interventions were completed, 154 of these with students. Results of the AUDIT confirm previous findings of high rates of risky drinking amongst Australian university students, with 43% (n=66) students identified as risky drinkers.

Discussions and Conclusions: The Drink in Check project demonstrates the potential of training student leaders to screen and provide brief interventions to their university peers. It is readily scalable and can be used in other jurisdictions.

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