

A pre-implementation study to understand women's knowledge of the alcohol-breast cancer link, and acceptability of alcohol brief intervention in the breast screen setting

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Introduction/Issue: Alcohol is a major modifiable risk factor for breast cancer in women, yet population awareness of this risk is low. The Peter MacCallum's Lifepool Cohort of breast screen service users was examined, to understand women's alcohol consumption levels, knowledge of the alcohol-breast cancer link, and how an alcohol brief intervention could be implemented in breast screen services, from the perspective of service users.

Method/Approach: Guided by the Consolidated Framework for Implementation Research, this mixed-methods formative evaluation comprised a retrospective analysis of Lifepool Cohort data (N=49,374), and an online survey (N=381) and focus groups/interviews (N=31) with subsets of women from the Lifepool community.

Key Findings: Of the wider Lifepool Cohort, 85.5% women (mean age=59.9 years, SD=7.3) consume alcohol, one in six (16.1%) drink above current Australian alcohol guidelines, and 7.9% drink daily. Of the subset of women surveyed, just 22% accurately identified alcohol as a breast cancer risk factor, and nearly all (97.0%) supported adding 5-minutes to their screening appointment to receive breast cancer risk-reduction information. Women participating in focus groups/interviews shared their perspectives on factors that would promote successful implementation of an alcohol brief intervention trial in the breast screen setting, including advanced notification about the study, impactful messaging, and providing the intervention in video format, and in a non-stigmatising way (i.e. alongside other female-specific health information).

Discussion/Conclusion: These findings demonstrate a clear need to increase the alcohol literacy of this population and that, with implementation considerations, alcohol brief intervention is acceptable to women in the context of the breast screen setting.

Implications for Translational Research: This formative research has informed the Health4Her trial currently being implemented in a Victorian breast screening service (ClinicalTrials.gov: NCT04715516), where the aim is to also evaluate intervention and setting factors that predict and facilitate breast screen service practice change, with significant potential for population benefit.

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