

Participant Information Sheet

Study Title: A Web-based Parenting Intervention to Prevent Alcohol Misuse in Adolescents: An Initial Evaluation

Investigators: Dr. Marie Yap, Professor Anthony Jorm, Professor Dan Lubman, Dr. Claire Kelly, Mr Stefan Cvetkovski.

You are invited to participate in research being conducted by the University of Melbourne, and Turning Point Alcohol and Drug Centre. The overall aim of this research is to evaluate whether a web-based intervention providing parents with tailored information on parenting strategies is effective in improving parents' knowledge about adolescents and alcohol, confidence about parenting, and parenting behaviours; and hence preventing or reducing alcohol misuse in their adolescent child. In this project, "alcohol misuse" is defined as any use of alcohol outside of the recommendations of the National Health and Medical Research Council (NH&MRC) of Australia www.nhmrc.gov.au.

What is the project about?

It is recommended that adolescents under the age of 15 do not consume alcohol at all, that those between 15-17 delay initiation of alcohol consumption as long as possible, and that any drinking by 15-17 year olds be at low risk levels in a safe environment supervised by adults (Australian Guidelines to Reduce Health Risks from Drinking Alcohol, 2009). To fulfil such recommendations, parents of adolescents may find it helpful to know appropriate parenting strategies which will delay the onset of drinking and reduce alcohol misuse in their child.

Our team has determined a range of appropriate parenting strategies which are supported by high quality research and endorsed by experts in the field of parenting and adolescent alcohol misuse for parents of adolescents aged 12 to 17 years. We have developed a web-based intervention which is designed to help parents implement these strategies and improve their skills in managing alcohol use in their adolescent children. This project will provide an initial evaluation of this intervention, and we will use the results to develop a larger study to evaluate the effects of the intervention.

What will I be asked to do?

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to do the following:

1. Provide us with a user name (you may use a pseudonym and remain anonymous) and email address at which we can contact you during the project. In addition, we will ask for some demographic information.
2. Complete a 10- to 15-minute online survey about your current parenting practices regarding alcohol and your adolescent. You will receive automated feedback messages that are tailored to your answers, which include strategies that you can use to help you more confidently handle the issue of alcohol with your child. You can print out or email the feedback to yourself for your records.
3. Complete a web-based parenting program that offers more extensive guidance and tips on parenting regarding alcohol and

your adolescent. This program consists of up to 13 modules that target specific issues (e.g. talking to your adolescent about alcohol) by providing information, examples, interactive and goal-setting exercises. Certain modules are recommended for you based on your responses to the survey, and you can further tailor your program according to your interests. Modules may take between 20-30 minutes to complete, depending on the topic and the way you choose to engage with it. You will receive regular personalised email messages to pace you through the program and check in with you about the goals you have set.

4. Complete a 10-minute follow-up evaluation survey 2 months after completing the initial online survey.
5. Where possible, you may want to encourage your spouse or partner to take part as well.

All parts of the project can be completed whenever you want, wherever you have access to the internet. The web-based parenting program requires that you complete a module in its entirety before moving on to the next module.

Who is being asked to participate?

We are inviting people using the internet who are parents of adolescent children (aged 12-17) from Australia, New Zealand, Canada, the USA, UK and Ireland. Although this intervention is primarily aimed at parents with children aged 12-17, parents with older or younger children are welcome to participate if they wish.

What if I change my mind?

Participation in this project is voluntary. If you change your mind about participating, you are free to withdraw from the project at any time. In addition, you may also withdraw any of your data that can be identified (information about yourself and responses to surveys) if you wish by contacting us.

What about privacy?

Any data we collect from you will be stored separately from any identifying information to protect your confidentiality. It will be held under password protection and can only be accessed by researchers named on this project. Data from the project will be destroyed after a minimum of 5 years after the final report on the study has been published. Any written or verbal reports resulting from the project will contain only group data. Individual participants will not be identifiable in any report.

Are there any risks?

We have identified here a few possible risks to you in taking part:

1. *You might get upset or distressed from answering the surveys, receiving the feedback, or completing the parenting program.*
If you do become distressed, please seek support if you feel you need to talk to someone about how you are feeling. You may have a support network available to you (including health professionals, family or friends).
2. *You might find the feedback message confronting, because it will highlight not just areas you are doing well in, but also areas of concern where you need to improve or change.*
After completing the survey, you can obtain more information if you are interested, by reading the parenting guidelines or by completing the parenting program. The guidelines will be freely accessible as a downloadable pdf from the website, and as topical webpages on the website. You can commence the parenting program immediately after completing the survey and receiving your feedback.
3. *You might feel distressed even after completing the parenting program if you feel that it did not adequately address your concerns (eg, about more serious problems in yourself or your child).*
If this occurs, we recommend that you seek appropriate local professional help. Information on where to seek professional help or support can be found at:
www.parentingstrategies.net/alcohol/help/.

What are the benefits?

This project is designed to equip parents with effective and appropriate parenting strategies to prevent, delay, and manage alcohol use in their child. Parents will learn what changes they can make in their own behaviour that can positively influence their adolescent and protect their adolescent from alcohol misuse. The knowledge gained from this research could also lead to decreased adolescent alcohol misuse in the community and a reduction in alcohol-related problems later in life.

Who do I contact for information about the project?

If you would like further information before deciding to participate, please email us at enquiries@parentingstrategies.net.

What if I have concerns about the project?

If you have concerns about the scientific aspects of the study, please contact the Principal Researcher,
Dr. Marie Yap, email: m.yap@unimelb.edu.au or
Professor Tony Jorm, email: ajorm@unimelb.edu.au.

The project has been approved by the University of Melbourne Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have concerns about the ethics of the study, please contact the Executive Officer, Human Research Ethics, The University of Melbourne, phone: +61-3-8344-2073, fax: +61-3-9347-6739.