

Clinical Addiction Research and Education

# Management of Unhealthy Alcohol Use: From Research to Practice

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Boston Medical Center is the primary teaching affiliate  
of the Boston University School of Medicine.

# WHAT IS WRONG WITH THIS PICTURE?

- Tobacco \$193, drug \$181, alcohol \$235 billion
- Leading causes of preventable death:
  - 1. tobacco
  - 2. overweight
  - 3. alcohol
  - ...
  - 9. drugs
- NIDA \$ 1billion, NIAAA \$460 Million
- CRIT opioid talk 40”, alcohol talk 40”

# Opportunities to discuss alcohol with patients and/or trainees

Esophageal cancer  
Chronic pancreatitis  
Cirrhosis and chronic hepatitis  
Lip, oral cavity, pharynx, larynx cancer  
Acute pancreatitis  
Pulmonary tuberculosis  
Hepatic neoplasm  
Esophageal, stomach, duodenal diseases  
Hypertension  
Cerebrovascular disease  
Medication interactions  
Renal failure  
Medical conditions worsening  
Fetal harm  
Cirrhosis  
Alcoholism  
Atrial fibrillation (holiday heart)  
Cardiomyopathy  
Hypertension  
Nutritional  
Malnutrition  
Thiamine and folate deficiency  
Endocrine/Metabolic  
Osteoporosis  
Magnesium, calcium, potassium, phosphorus  
Hypo- and hyperglycemia  
Acidoses (primary and secondary, due to ingestions)  
Impaired fertility (men and women) and sexual function  
Anemia (folate, toxic, iron, chronic disease, hemolysis)  
Pancytopenia  
Coagulopathy  
Hepatitis  
Toxic (alcohol, acetaminophen)  
Cirrhosis

Ascites and edema  
Coagulopathy and bleeding  
Spontaneous bacterial peritonitis, Encephalopathy  
Hepatoma  
Gastrointestinal  
GI bleeding: varices, Mallory-Weiss, gastritis, ulcer.  
esophagitis, gastritis  
Esophageal stricture, malignancy  
Gastric cancer  
Malabsorption and diarrhea, with or without  
Pancreatitis (acute and chronic)  
Social problems  
Stroke  
Violent death  
Infertility  
Tremor  
Ecchymosis/purpura  
Palmar erythema  
Scars from trauma  
Gynecomastia  
Hepatomegaly  
Spiders  
Uric acid, glucose  
MCV, AST, HDL, GGT  
Heartburn  
Gastrointestinal upset  
AM cough or HA  
Anxiety, stress  
Insomnia  
Concentration  
Memory

Tachycardia  
Hypertension  
Apnea  
Impaired gag  
Cough  
Myopathy  
Gout  
Rhabdomyolysis  
Kidney failure  
Pneumonia, lung abscess  
TB  
Central nervous system infection  
Diabetes  
Pneumonia  
Hypokalemia  
Hypomagnesemia  
Hypocalcemia  
Intoxication, blackouts, overdose  
Withdrawal seizures  
Head trauma and subdural hematoma  
Sensory, motor or autonomic neuropathy  
Wernicke's syndrome  
Korsakoff's (amnesic) syndrome  
Cerebellar degeneration  
Stroke (hemorrhagic, ischemic)  
Marchiafava-Bignami (corpus callosum)  
Confusion, language, dementia, seizures  
Breast cancer  
Depression



A 43 year old man presents because he bumped his head after slipping and falling. No loss of consciousness.

Breath alcohol is 210 mg/dL (0.21 g/100mL).

He reports no hematemesis, hematochezia, melena, tremors, past seizures, liver disease, gastrointestinal bleeding, pancreatitis or delirium.

He lives alone and reports drinking all day since he became disabled from lumbar disc disease ten years ago. He takes no medications, has no allergies, and smokes one pack of cigarettes daily.

T 98, RR 18, HR 110 (regular), BP 136/82 standing, 100, 140/70 lying down.

Unable to visualize fundi, EOMI, supple neck, clear chest, no murmur, no tremor; frontal ecchymosis.

He is awake, alert and oriented to place, time and person. Speech is fluent. Gait normal.

Sensorimotor exam non-focal.

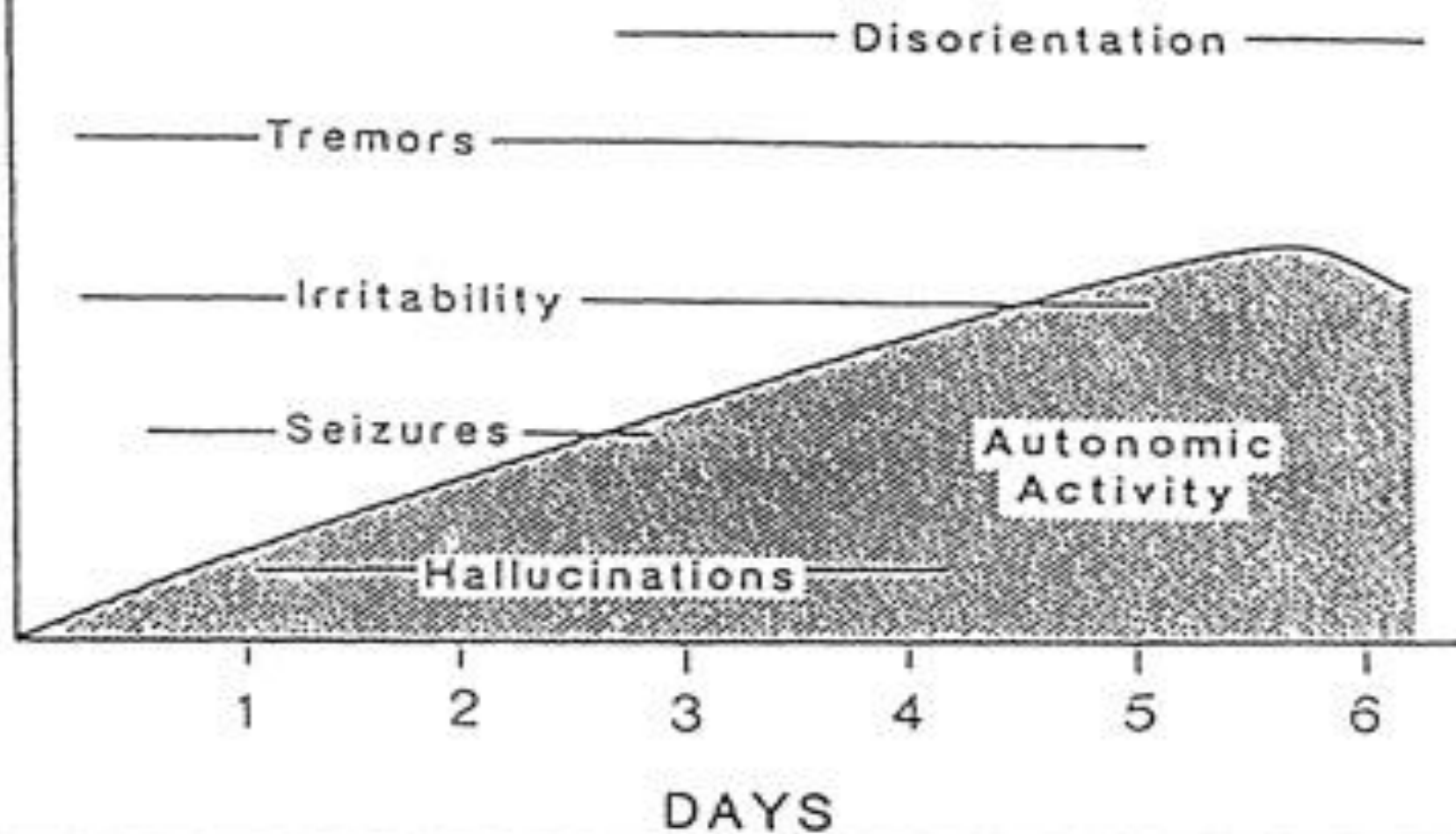


The patient is seen having a generalized tonic-clonic convulsion.

- What is the most likely etiology?
- What is the appropriate work-up?

Minor  
Withdrawal

Major  
Withdrawal  
(Delirium Tremens)

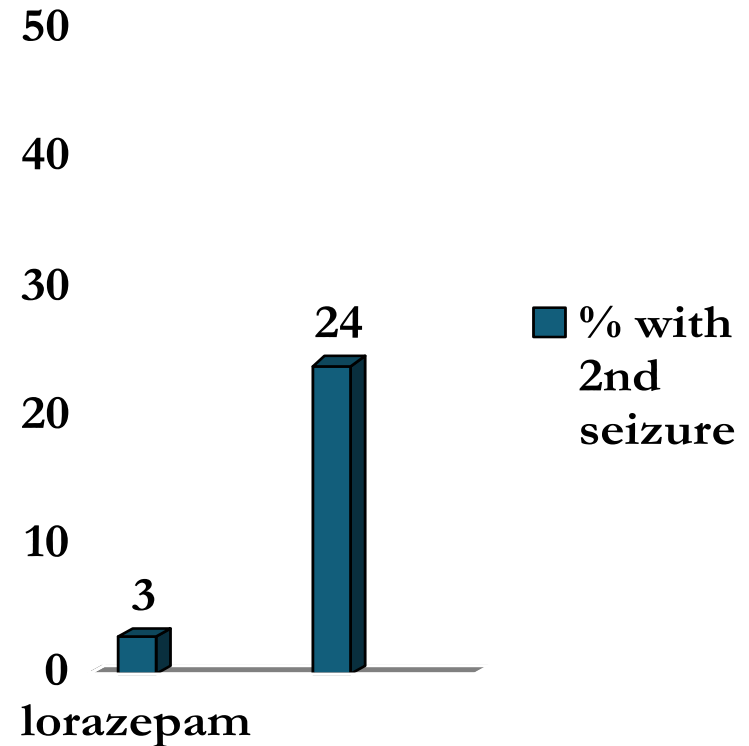


# ALCOHOL WITHDRAWAL SEIZURES

- Recurrent detox and prior seizure are risk factors
- Occur 24-48 hrs after abstinence or decreased intake
- Often occur prior to autonomic hyperactivity
- Generalized, single or a few (79% <3, <3% status), over a short time (86%/1st 6 hrs)
- Fever, delirium, focal exam, head trauma, focal or multiple seizures, 1st seizure ever, or status suggest other diagnoses
- CT scanning unhelpful if clinical picture consistent

# LORAZEPAM PREVENTS RECURRENCE

- 186 subjects with alcohol withdrawal seizures
- RPCDBT
- 2 mg of lorazepam IV
- Also decreased hospital admission





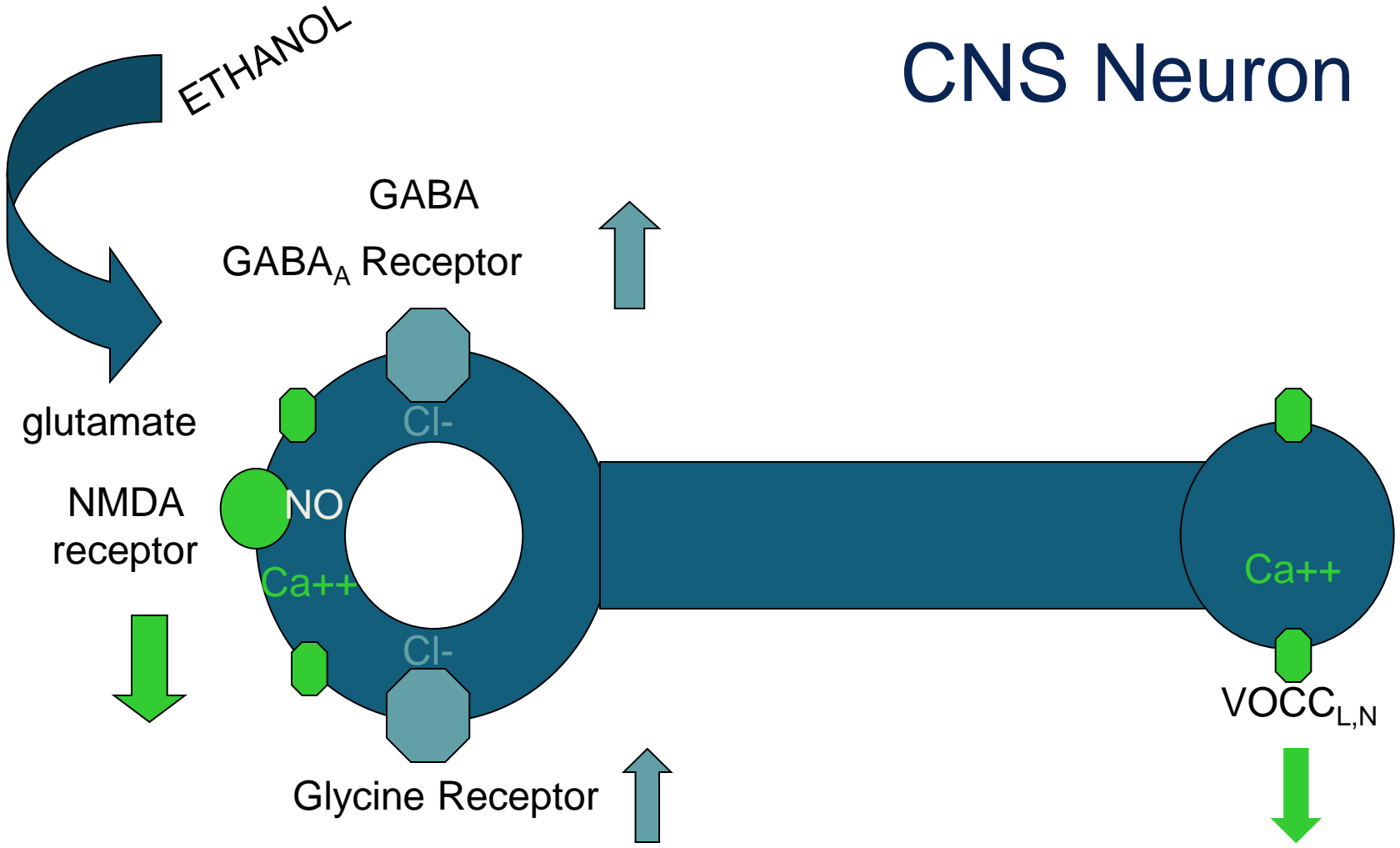
Four hours later (15-20 mg/dL/hr [1 drink] elimination), the patient becomes tremulous, anxious, and complains of nausea. BP 134/84, HR 90, ethanol level 146 mg/dl.

- What is the diagnosis?
- What is appropriate management?

# DSM-5 ALCOHOL WITHDRAWAL DEFINITION

- Cessation or reduction in alcohol use that has been heavy and prolonged
- Two or more of the following, developing in hours to days, causing distress or impairment, not due to other condition
  - Autonomic hyperactivity (sweating, tachycardia)
  - Increased hand tremor
  - Insomnia
  - Nausea or vomiting
  - Transient tactile, visual or auditory hallucinations or illusions
  - Psychomotor agitation
  - Anxiety
  - Generalized tonic-clonic seizures
- The above signs or symptoms cause clinically significant distress or impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas of functioning
- The signs or symptoms are not attributable to another medical condition and are not better explained by another mental disorder, including intoxication or withdrawal from another substance

# CNS Neuron



# Benzodiazepines reduce seizures

ANY 1/188 (0.5%)

Placebo 16/201 (8%)

RRR 93%,  $p < 0.001$

*Sereny 1965, Kiam 1969, Zilm 1980, Sellers 1983, Naranjo 1983,  
summarized in Mayo-Smith MF & ASAM Working Group JAMA 1997;278:144-51*

# Benzodiazepines reduce delirium

Chlordiazepoxide	3/172 (2%)
Placebo	11/186 (6%)

RRR 71%,  $p=0.04$

*Rosenfeld 1961, Sereny 1965, Kaim 1969, Zilm 1980,  
summarized in Mayo-Smith MF & ASAM Working Group JAMA 1997;278:144-51*



EXCEPTIONAL CARE. WITHOUT EXCEPTION

March 25, 2009

Robinson 402 (B-402)  
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[Redacted] M.D.  
Assistant Professor of Cardiothoracic Surgery  
Boston University School of Medicine

Dear Dr. Alford:

This is a brief note to let you know that I saw your patient [Redacted] in follow-up today in our Center for Thoracic Oncology [Redacted]. I had taken him to the operating room for a right thoracotomy and resection of his large pleural tumor. This required an en bloc resection of portions of the third and fourth ribs. The defect was reconstructed with a Gortex patch. [Redacted] predictably suffer from delirium tremens in the Intensive Care Unit despite benzodiazepine prophylaxis. This was quelled with p.o. alcohol. He left the hospital on postoperative day #6.

Pathology revealed a complete resection of a solitary fibrous tumor of the pleura measuring 15 cm x 13 cm x 6.5 cm.

Today in clinic [Redacted] quite well. His incision has completely healed. His chest x-ray reveals some residual fluid at the right anterior base, which is somewhat improved from his discharge film.

I will plan to [Redacted] six months' time with a new chest x-ray.

Thank you very much for referring him to me. I will certainly keep you informed of any new developments.

Very truly yours,

[Redacted Signature]

cc: [Redacted], M.D.  
BMC General Surgery  
850 Harrison Avenue, 4<sup>th</sup> floor  
Boston, MA 02118

[Redacted]

*Yikes!!*

**“He did predictably suffer from delirium tremens. This was quelled with p.o. alcohol”**

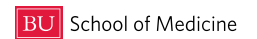


BOSTON UNIVERSITY MEDICAL CENTER

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Boston University School of Medicine  
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Boston University Henry M. Goldman School of Dental Medicine



EXCEPTIONAL CARE. WITHOUT EXCEPTION.



# Alcohol Not for withdrawal (or hangover)

- Pros
  - The perfect cross-tolerant drug
  - The alcoholic's drug of choice
- Cons
  - Two controlled trials:
    - Gower 1980: more DTs and seizures vs. chlordiazepoxide
    - Spies 1995 (RCT): no diff vs. benzo+haloperidol or clonidine
  - Narrow TI
  - Many toxicities (hepatitis, gastritis, pancreatitis, marrow)
  - Need to monitor and adjust levels (and target unknown)
  - The alcoholic's drug of choice (reinforces acceptability, use)



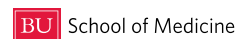
## Take a Hair of the Dog that Bit You.

After a debauch, take a little wine the next day. Take a cool draught of ale in the morning, after a night's excess.

“If a dog bites you, put a hair of the dog into the wound.”

“*Similia similibus curantur*” (like cures like).

E. Cobham Brewer 1810–1897. Dictionary of Phrase and Fable. 1898.



**Nausea and vomiting.** Ask "Do you feel sick to your stomach? Have you vomited?"

Observation:

- 0—No nausea and no vomiting
- 1—Mild nausea with no vomiting
- 2—
- 3—
- 4—Intermittent nausea with dry heaves
- 5—
- 6—
- 7—Constant nausea, frequent dry heaves, and vomiting

**Tremor.** Ask patient to extend arms and spread fingers apart.

Observation:

- 0—No tremor
- 1—Tremor not visible but can be felt, fingertip to fingertip
- 2—
- 3—
- 4—Moderate tremor with arms extended
- 5—
- 6—
- 7—Severe tremor, even with arms not extended

**Paroxysmal sweats**

Observation:

- 0—No sweat visible
- 1—Barely perceptible sweating; palms moist
- 2—
- 3—
- 4—Beads of sweat obvious on forehead
- 5—
- 6—
- 7—Drenching sweats

**Anxiety.** Ask "Do you feel nervous?"

Observation:

- 0—No anxiety (at ease)
- 1—Mildly anxious
- 2—
- 3—
- 4—Moderately anxious or guarded, so anxiety is inferred
- 5—
- 6—
- 7—Equivalent to acute panic states as occur in severe delirium or acute schizophrenic reactions

**Agitation**

Observation:

- 0—Normal activity
- 1—Somewhat more than normal activity
- 2—
- 3—
- 4—Moderately fidgety and restless
- 5—
- 6—
- 7—Paces back and forth during most of the interview or constantly thrashes about

**Tactile disturbances.** Ask "Do you have any itching, pins-and-needles sensations, burning, or numbness, or do you feel like bugs are crawling on or under your skin?"

Observation:

- 0—None
- 1—Very mild itching, pins-and-needles sensation, burning, or numbness
- 2—Mild itching, pins-and-needles sensation, burning, or numbness
- 3—Moderate itching, pins-and-needles sensation, burning, or numbness
- 4—Moderately severe hallucinations
- 5—Severe hallucinations
- 6—Extremely severe hallucinations
- 7—Continuous hallucinations

**Auditory disturbances.** Ask "Are you more aware of sounds around you? Are they harsh? Do they frighten you? Are you hearing anything that is disturbing to you? Are you hearing things you know are not there?"

Observation:

- 0—Not present
- 1—Very mild harshness or ability to frighten
- 2—Mild harshness or ability to frighten
- 3—Moderate harshness or ability to frighten
- 4—Moderately severe hallucinations
- 5—Severe hallucinations
- 6—Extremely severe hallucinations
- 7—Continuous hallucinations

**Visual disturbances.** Ask "Does the light appear to be too bright? Is its color different? Does it hurt your eyes? Are you seeing anything that is disturbing to you? Are you seeing things you know are not there?"

Observation:

- 0—Not present
- 1—Very mild sensitivity
- 2—Mild sensitivity
- 3—Moderate sensitivity
- 4—Moderately severe hallucinations
- 5—Severe hallucinations
- 6—Extremely severe hallucinations
- 7—Continuous hallucinations

**Headache, fullness in head.** Ask "Does your head feel different? Does it feel like there is a band around your head?"

Do not rate for dizziness or lightheadness; otherwise, rate severity.

- 0—Not present
- 1—Very mild
- 2—Mild
- 3—Moderate
- 4—Moderately severe
- 5—Severe
- 6—Very severe
- 7—Extremely severe

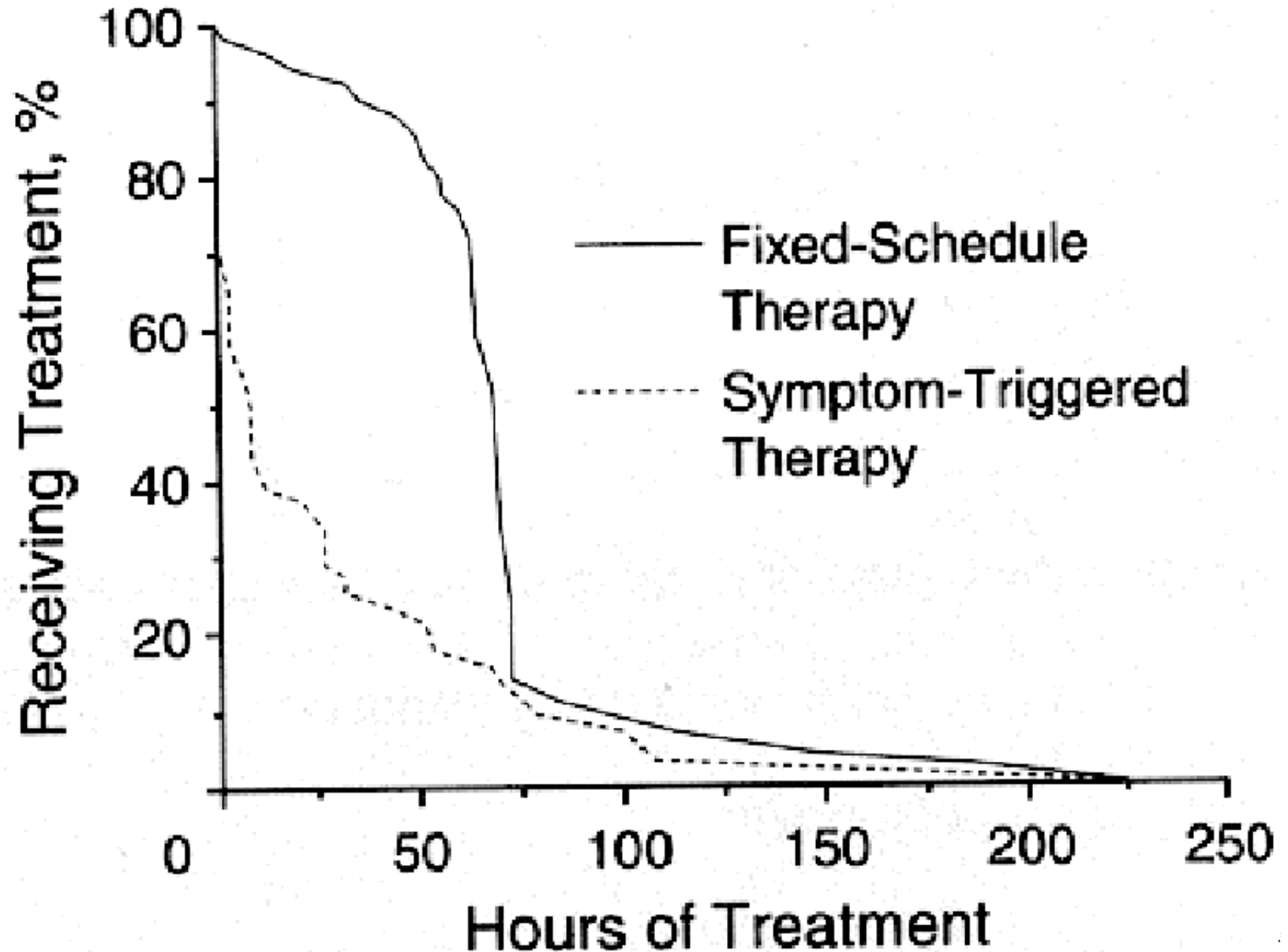
**Orientation and clouding of sensorium.** Ask "What day is this? Where are you? Who am I?"

Observation:

- 0—Orientated and can do serial additions
- 1—Cannot do serial additions or is uncertain about date
- 2—Date disorientation by no more than two calendar days
- 3—Date disorientation by more than two calendar days
- 4—Disorientated for place and/or person



# Decreased Duration of Treatment



# American Society of Addiction Medicine Practice Guidelines

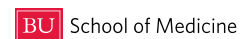
- **Symptom-triggered** (q 1 when CIWA-Ar $\geq$ 8)
  - Chlordiazepoxide 50-100 mg
  - Diazepam 10-20 mg
  - Lorazepam 2-4 mg
- **Fixed schedule** (q 6 for 4/8 doses + PRN)
  - Chlordiazepoxide 50 mg/25 mg
  - Diazepam 10 mg/5 mg
  - Lorazepam 2 mg/1 mg

# Caution with Protocols

- SFGH: Fixed-schedule plus PRN
  - Decreased transfers to ICU (OR 0.6); **increased** mortality (OR 2.1) and LOS (by 18%)
- Mayo Clinic: STT protocol
  - 55% had no recent drinking (57% of whom couldn't communicate); 14% drank but couldn't communicate
  - 7 of 11 AEs in people ineligible (9 DTs (2 w/seizure), 1 seizure, 1 death)

*Pletcher et al. J Qual Pat Safety 2005;31:148-57*

*Hecksel et al. Mayo Clin Proc 2008;83:274-9*



The patient tells you he is at the racetrack with his friends,  
BP 170/100, HR 110, Temp 99.

- What is the diagnosis?
- What if he were febrile?

DSM-5 DEFINITION: alcohol withdrawal delirium

A. A disturbance in attention (i.e., reduced ability to direct, focus, sustain, and shift attention) and awareness (reduced orientation to the environment)

B. The disturbance develops over a short period of time (usually hours to days), represents a change from baseline attention and awareness, and fluctuates in severity during the course of a day

C. An additional disturbance in cognition (e.g., memory deficit, disorientation, language, visuospatial ability, or perception)

D. The disturbances in Criteria A and C are not better explained by another preexisting, established, or evolving neurocognitive disorder and do not occur in the context of a severely reduced level of arousal, such as coma

E. There is evidence from the history, physical examination, or laboratory findings that the disturbance is a direct physiological consequence of another medical condition, substance intoxication or withdrawal (i.e., due to a drug of abuse or to a medication), or exposure to a toxin, or multiple etiologies



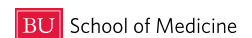
# DTs: Treatment time to light somnolence/adequate control

- N=34, RCT
- Diazepam 10 mg IV then 5mg q 5" vs. paraldehyde 30cc PR q 30" until calm but awake
- All complications in paraldehyde group
  - sudden death (2), apnea (2), brachial plexus injury (2), 3rd floor jump attempt (1), bitten nurse (1), bitten intern (1)
- Diazepam 200 mg mean dose required

*Mayo-Smith et al. Arch Intern Med, Jul 2004; 164: 1405 – 1412*

*Systematic evidence review and practice guideline*

*Thompson, Maddrey, Osler Medical Housestaff. Ann Int Med 1978;82:175*

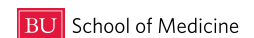


# DT Treatment Trials

## Sedative-hypnotics Rx of choice

- Decreased duration of delirium by 22-90 hours
  - 3 of 4 trials; paraldehyde vs. neuroleptics
- Decreased mortality RR 0.15 (95% CI 0.03-0.83)
  - 5 trials (no placebo) vs. neuroleptics; N=386, 1 vs. 8 deaths
- Requirements variable and sometimes high
  - Case reports
    - >2000 mg of diazepam in 2 days
    - 12,424 mg of diazepam, 121 mg of lorazepam, 3,050 mg of chlordiazepoxide, and 2,025 mg of midazolam in 8 weeks
      - “Refractory” DTs—theory=benzodiazepine receptor saturation
      - Pentobarbital; or propofol (GABA and NMDA mechanisms)

*Mayo-Smith et al. Arch Intern Med, Jul 2004; 164: 1405 – 1412*  
*Systematic evidence review and practice guideline*



# DTs: Recommendation

- Parenteral benzodiazepines, prefer long-acting
- Example regimen:
  - Diazepam, 5 mg intravenously (2.5 mg/min)
  - If not effective, repeat in 5 to 10“
  - if not satisfactory, use 10 mg for the third and fourth doses
  - if not effective, use 20 mg for the fifth and subsequent doses until sedation
  - Then 5 to 20 mg q 1h PRN to maintain light somnolence

# ALCOHOL WITHDRAWAL TRIAGE

- Outpatient
  - Last drink >36 hrs: symptoms unlikely to develop
  - No other risk factors, responsible other
- Consider inpatient
  - Past seizure, drug use, anxiety disorder, multiple detoxifications, alcohol >150 (risks more severe symptoms)
- Inpatient
  - Older age (>60), concurrent acute illness, seizure, moderate to severe symptoms (risks DTs)
- ICU level
  - DTs



# MANAGEMENT OF UNHEALTHY ALCOHOL USE: BEYOND WITHDRAWAL

- Detoxification is not treatment
- **Brief Intervention**
- Treatment
  - Counseling
  - **Pharmacotherapy**
- Self and mutual help

# What is Brief Intervention?

- 10-15", empathic
- Feedback
  - Ask permission
  - Ask what patient thinks of it
- Advice (clear)
- Goal setting
  - Negotiate
  - Menu of options
  - Support self-efficacy
- Follow-up



“You are drinking more than is safe for your health.”

“My best medical advice is that you cut down or quit.”

“What do you think? Are you willing to consider making changes?”

Table 4. Brief Counseling and Referral.*	
How to Advise or Refer Patients	Examples or Explanations
Elicit information about how the patient views the problem.	“What do you think about your drinking? Are you ready to make a change in your alcohol use? How confident are you that you could cut down if you wanted to?”
Express concern and provide clear advice regarding the ideal goal (abstinence or reduced consumption for those with nondependent alcohol use, achieved through brief counseling; abstinence for patients with alcohol dependence). <sup>‡</sup>	“I am concerned about your drinking; my medical advice is that the healthiest choice for you is to cut down or abstain.”
Provide specific feedback about alcohol consumption in comparison with population norms, and link existing problems to alcohol use when appropriate, to make information relevant to the patient.	“Ninety-three percent of adults drink less than the amounts you report drinking. You mentioned your heartburn is worse when you drink. Alcohol is probably causing your heartburn.”
Express empathy, let the patient know you believe that change is possible, and acknowledge that it is the patient’s responsibility to change.	“The fact you were able to quit before for a week tells me you can do it again. But it must be difficult. It is up to you to make these changes.”
When the patient expresses interest or gives permission, provide information, including a menu of options, about how to change.	“Would you like information on how to cut down or abstain? Other people have found a range of options helpful, such as keeping a drinking diary, counseling, and mutual-help groups. What do you think about these?”
Anticipate and discuss situations in which the patient feels at risk for drinking excessively, and talk about strategies to avoid drinking excessively.	“What ways might help you avoid drinking excessively when you go out with friends who drink?” Have the patient keep a drinking diary (including the number of drinks consumed per day).
Schedule a follow-up session to assess drinking and changes in alcohol use.	“Please think about your drinking and the health risks we discuss; contact me if you decide you would like assistance in the future. Let’s schedule a follow-up visit in a month to talk again.” In the follow-up, review the drinking goal, the actual drinking history, and any consequences since the last visit. If the serum levels of $\gamma$ -glutamyltransferase or carbohydrate-deficient transferrin were initially abnormal, monitor levels.
For patients who are not ready to change their alcohol use, a advice about changing their habits or getting help is counterproductive because the patient will enumerate the reasons against change; avoid confrontation and argument.	“What do you like about drinking? What do you like to drink? What are some problems you have noticed when or after you drink? What would it be like not to drink?”
Elicit the patient’s own reasons for drinking, reasons for not drinking, and concerns about changing.	Consider referral to a specialist (a physician who specializes in addiction medicine or an alcoholism-treatment provider) for evaluation and confirmation of the diagnosis, even if the patient is not ready to begin treatment.
For patients with alcohol dependence, provide brief counseling with the goal of increasing motivation to change; the recommended change is abstinence and linkage with any or all known effective interventions (mutual-help groups, pharmacotherapy, and counseling). <sup>‡</sup>	Help the patient take the first step (e.g., make an appointment); follow up on treatment entry and engagement.
Know local referral options, such as health plan referral services, public treatment resources, physicians, other counselors, employee-assistance programs, and national resources (in the United States, <a href="http://findtreatment.samhsa.gov">http://findtreatment.samhsa.gov</a> ); know what patients can expect when they seek assistance. <sup>‡</sup>	
For patients in recovery, address plans for what to do in the event of relapse. <sup>¶</sup>	“What would you do if you felt your drinking was out of control?”

\* Data are from the Department of Health and Human Services<sup>3</sup> and the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force.<sup>13</sup> This model includes a recommended structure for effective discussions about changing health behavior (elicit-provide-elicit).<sup>13</sup> The elements of brief interventions with proven efficacy include feedback, responsibility, advice, a menu of options, empathy, and support of self-efficacy.  
<sup>‡</sup> Patients may need additional assistance if their goal is not achieved. Patients who are pregnant or trying to conceive, who have a medical condition that would be worsened by drinking, or who are taking a medication that interacts with alcohol should be advised to abstain. Discuss when they seek assistance.  
<sup>¶</sup> Patients may need additional assistance if their goal is not achieved. Patients who are pregnant or trying to conceive, who have a medical condition that would be worsened by drinking, or who are taking a medication that interacts with alcohol should be advised to abstain. Discuss when they seek assistance.

# EFFICACY OF BRIEF INTERVENTION VS. NO BI

- ≥22 original RCTs, 8 systematic reviews
  - Lower proportion of drinkers of risky amounts (n=2784)
    - 57% vs. 69% at 1 year
  - Lower consumption (n=5639)
    - by 15% (38 grams per week)
- Decreased hospital utilization (≥2 RCTs)
- Cost-effective (spend \$166, save \$546 medical)
- 4 RCTs (n=1640), BI decreased mortality (RR 0.47)
- Some effects 3-16 years later\*

RCT=Randomized controlled trial

Kaner et al. Drug and Alcohol Review 2009;28:301–23

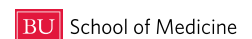
Beich et al. BMJ 2003;327:536

Bertholet et al. Arch Intern Med. 2005;165:986

\*Kristenson H, et al. Alcohol Clin Exp Res 1983;7:203

\*Fleming MF et al. Alcohol Clin Exp Res. 2002;26(1):36-43.

Cuijpers et al. *Addiction* 2004;99: 839–845



Duration and frequency may matter:  
Brief and Very Brief (VB) vs. Brief Multi-contact

**Brief and very brief**

Author(s)	N	Difference	Comment
Richmond et al. (VB)	378	-	Nonrandom
WHO (VB)	1559	+ B & VB	NS for women
Anderson & Scott	154	+	Men
Nilssen	338	+	
Senft et al.	516	Borderline	
Maisto et al.	301	-	Outside clinic
Scott & Anderson	72	-	Women

RED=no diff  
GREEN= + study

**Brief multi-contact**

Example intervention (Fleming)  
health booklet +  
2 10-15" physician discussions  
And follow-up nurse phone call

Whitlock et al. Ann Intern Med 2004;  
140:557-68.

Author(s)	N	Difference	Comment
Maisto et al.	301	-	Decrease but NS
Curry et al.	307	+	Good quality
Fleming et al.	774	+	Good quality
Fleming et al.	158	+	Good quality; Elderly
Nilssen	338	+	
Ockene	530	+	Good quality
Wallace	909	+	Good quality

# Details of BI literature with relevance to practice

- Key concept: “identified by screening”
- Best evidence: nondependent unhealthy use, primary care
  - Self-report and social desirability a limitation
    - Efficacy results modest
  - Studies find the right ‘zone’
    - More than minimally risky amounts, but not too much
- Almost all studies exclude dependence and even (very) heavy drinking
- Evidence of efficacy for outcomes beyond consumption is limited
  - Little evidence for linkage to specialty care
- Literature regarding ED and hospital mixed

# SETTING

- Most people identified by screening in hospitals have *dependence*
- Different expectations and goals
  - Comprehensive care?
  - Preventive care?
  - Longitudinal care? Long-term therapeutic alliance?
  - Teachable vs. learnable moments?



Belen Martinez et al INEBRIA 2007  
Saitz et al. Ann Intern Med 2007;146:167-76  
Freyer-Adam J et al. Drug Alcohol Depend 2008  
Bischoff G et al. Drug Alcohol Depend 2008  
Bischof et al. Int J Pub Health 2010  
Saitz et al. Int J Pub Health 2010



# SBI for other drugs in adults: not so promising

- RCT in urgent care
  - 9% difference in opioid abstinence (40% vs. 31%)
  - 5% difference in cocaine abstinence (22% vs. 17%)
  - No difference in linkage to treatment
- Multi-site RCT (international) in varied outpatient settings
  - Excluded mild and severe
  - Small (clinically insignificant) decreases in point scales representing marijuana and stimulant use but not opioid use
- 6 RCTs to be published in 2014
  - Woodruff et al-50% loss to follow-up; negative
  - Gelberg et al-positive, small effects, no lab outcomes
  - Schwartz et al-computer and person similar; no control
  - Bogenschutz et al-multisite ER study, >80% F/U, hair, **NEGATIVE**
  - Saitz et al-n=528 primary care, 98% F/U, hair, **NEGATIVE**

# SBI DRUGS

- Harder to change a behavior that is not socially sanctioned yet being done
- Injection, heroin, cocaine, MJ, qualitatively different
- Other reasons to ask/intervene: interactions/safety, diagnoses, help-seeking/recognized
- Need better ways to address in general medical settings...



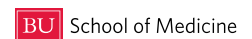
# CASE

A 53 year old woman drinks ½ to 1 pint of vodka daily and wishes to quit. She has a history of EGD-proven esophagitis, and has had recurrent hematemesis after drinking. She has no current acute medical problem. You are seeing her as an outpatient after hospital discharge. She feels she will drink even though she realizes she will bleed again. She refuses “inpatient rehab.”

# MAINTENANCE AND RELAPSE

- Anticipate difficult situations (triggers)
- Emphasize prior successes and use relapse as a learning experience, cope w/craving
- Help patient develop a plan to manage early relapses
- Facilitate involvement in treatment
  - 12-step groups
  - Counseling
  - Pharmacotherapy
  - Comorbid psychiatric disorders

*Friedmann PD, Saitz R, Samet JH. JAMA 1998;279(15):1227-31.*



# PATIENT SELECTION FOR PHARMACOTHERAPY

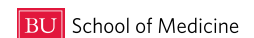
- All people with alcohol dependence who are:
  - currently drinking
  - experiencing craving or at risk for return to drinking
- Considerations
  - Specific medication contraindications
  - Psychosocial support/therapy and follow-up
    - Primary care med mgt (O'Malley; Anton\*) as effective as specialized behavioral therapy\*\*
  - Prescriber, access to monitoring (e.g. visits, liver enzymes)

\*O'Malley SS et al. *Arch Int Med* 2003;163:1695-1704.

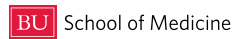
\*Anton RF et al. *JAMA* 2006 May 3;295:2003-17.

\*\*Latt NC, et al. *Med J Australia* 2002;176:530-534.

RCT: naltrexone effective without obligatory therapy

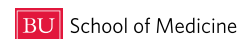


# Medication-Assisted Treatment



Medication-Assisted Treatment

Counseling-Assisted Pharmacotherapy



# PRESCRIBING

## Medications for Treating Alcohol Dependence

The chart below highlights some of the properties of each medication. It does not provide complete information and is not meant to be a substitute for the package inserts or other drug reference sources used by clinicians. For patient information about these and other drugs, the National Library of Medicine provides Medline Plus (<http://medlineplus.gov>).

Whether or not a medication should be prescribed and in what amount is a matter between individuals and their health care providers. The prescribing information provided here is not a substitute for a provider's judgment in an individual circumstance, and the NIH accepts no liability or responsibility for use of the information with regard to particular patients.

	Disulfiram (Antabuse®)	Naltrexone (ReVia®)	Acamprosate (Campral®)
<b>Action</b>	Inhibits intermediate metabolism of alcohol, causing a build-up of acetaldehyde and a reaction of flushing, sweating, nausea, and tachycardia if a patient drinks alcohol	Blocks opioid receptors, resulting in reduced craving and reduced reward in response to drinking	Affects glutamate and GABA neurotransmitter systems, but its alcohol-related action is unclear
<b>Contraindications</b>	Concomitant use of alcohol or alcohol-containing preparations or metronidazole; coronary artery disease; severe myocardial disease	Currently using opioids or in acute opioid withdrawal; anticipated need for opioid analgesics; acute hepatitis or liver failure	Severe renal impairment (CrCl ≤ 30 mL/min)
<b>Precautions</b>	High impulsivity—likely to drink while using it; psychoses (current or history); diabetes mellitus; epilepsy; hepatic dysfunction; hypothyroidism; renal impairment; rubber contact dermatitis	Other hepatic disease; renal impairment; history of suicide attempts. If opioid analgesia is required, larger doses may be required, and respiratory depression may be deeper and more prolonged.	Moderate renal impairment (dose adjustment for CrCl between 30–50 mL/min); depression or suicidality
<b>Serious adverse reactions</b>	Hepatitis; optic neuritis; peripheral neuropathy; psychotic reactions. Pregnancy Category C.	Will precipitate severe withdrawal if patient is dependent on opioids; hepatotoxicity (uncommon at usual doses). Pregnancy Category C.	
<b>Common side effects</b>	Metallic after-taste; dermatitis	Nausea; abdominal pain; constipation; dizziness; headache; anxiety; fatigue	Anxiety; depression. Rare events include the following: suicide attempt, acute kidney failure, heart failure, mesenteric arterial occlusion, cardiomyopathy, deep thrombophlebitis, and shock. Pregnancy Category C.
<b>Examples of drug interactions</b>	Amitypyline; anticoagulants such as warfarin; diazepam; isoniazid; metronidazole; phenytoin; theophylline; warfarin; any nonprescription drug containing alcohol	Opioid analgesics (blocks action); yohimbine (use with naltrexone increases negative drug effects)	Diarrhea; flatulence; nausea; abdominal pain; headache; back pain; infection; flu syndrome; chills; somnolence; decreased libido; anorexia; confusion
<b>Usual adult dosage</b>	Oral dose: 250 mg daily (range 125 mg to 500 mg)  Before prescribing: (1) warn that patient should not take disulfiram for at least 12 hours after drinking and that a disulfiram-alcohol reaction can occur up to 2 weeks after the last dose; and (2) warn about alcohol in the diet (e.g., sauces and vinegars) and in medications and toiletries  Follow-up: Monitor liver function tests periodically	Oral dose: 50 mg daily  Before prescribing: Evaluate for possible current opioid use; consider a urine toxicology screen for opioids, including synthetic opioids. Obtain liver function tests.  Follow-up: Monitor liver function tests periodically	No clinically relevant interactions known  Oral dose: 666 mg (two 333-mg tablets) three times daily or, for patients with moderate renal impairment (CrCl 30–50 mL/min), three 333 mg (one tablet) three times daily  Before -

The information in this chart was drawn primarily from Medline Plus.  
JULY 2005

Helping Patients Who Drink Too Much  
NIAAA, 2007

## Alcohol followup progress note

Heavy drinking days in the past month  
(≥ 5 drinks for men/≥ 4 for women)

days (positive = ≥ 1)

Average weekly drinking in the past month

drinks per week

Working diagnosis:  At-risk drinking  Alcohol abuse  Alcohol dependence

Goal:  Drinking within limits  Abstinence  Disulfiram

Current medications:  Naltrexone  Acamprostate  Disulfiram

Other (specify): \_\_\_\_\_

Interval history and progress: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Physical examination and laboratory: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Assessment:  At-risk drinking  Goals fully met  
 Alcohol abuse  Goals partially met  
 Alcohol dependence  Goals not met

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### Plan:

- Repeat screening as needed  Patient education about drinking limits
- Recommended drinking within limits → Did the patient agree?  yes  no
- Recommended abstinence → Did the patient agree?  yes  no
- Naltrexone 50 mg daily  Acamprostate 666 mg 3 times daily  Disulfiram 250 mg daily
- Thiamine 100 mg IM/PO  Acamprostate 333 mg 3 times daily (for moderate renal impairment)
- Other medication/dosage: \_\_\_\_\_
- Referral (specify): \_\_\_\_\_

### Followup:

Additional plan (withdrawal treatment, coexisting conditions): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

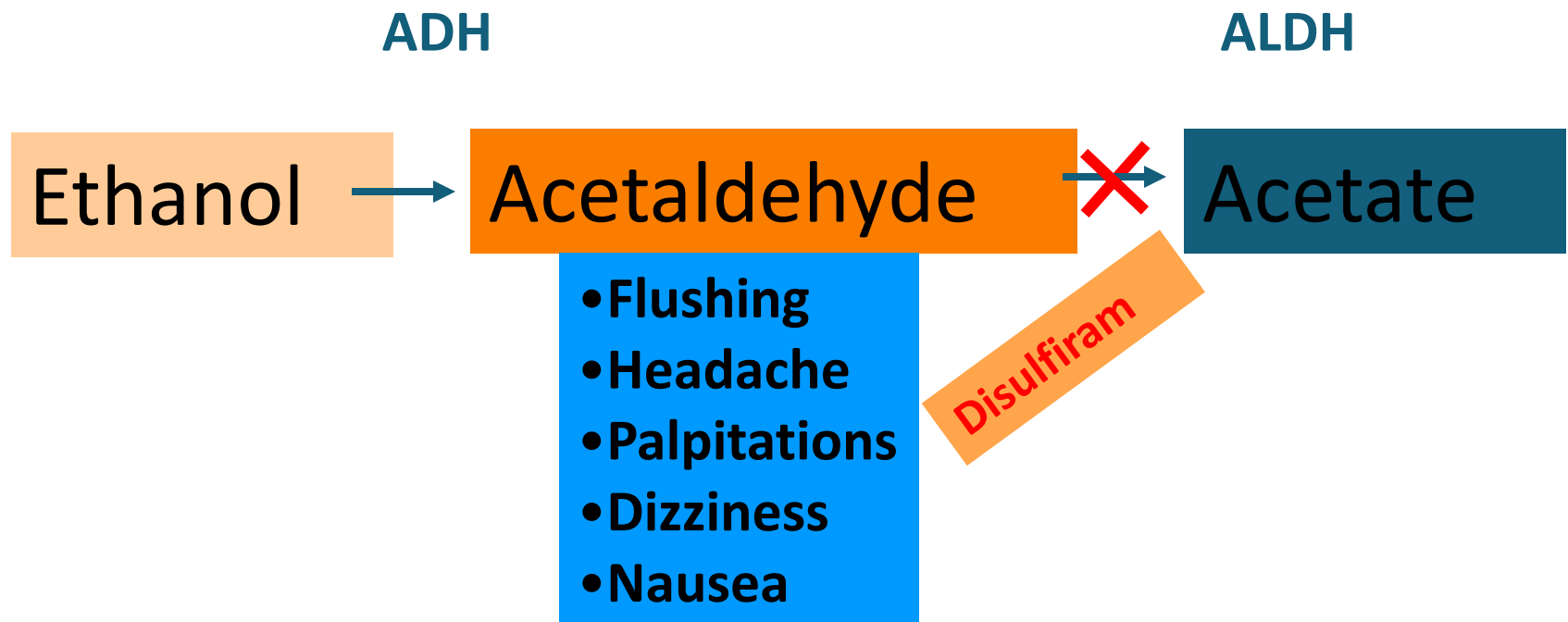
## Medications for Treating Alcohol Dependence

The chart below highlights some of the properties of each medication. It does not provide and is not meant to be a substitute for the package inserts or other drug reference sources used by patient information about these and other drugs, the National Library of Medicine provides N (http://medlineplus.gov).

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Medication	Action	Contraindications	Precautions	Serious adverse reactions	Common side effects	Examples of drug interactions	Usual adult dosage
<b>Disulfiram (Antabuse®)</b>	Inhibits intermediate metabolism of alcohol, causing a build-up of acetaldehyde and a reaction of flushing, sweating, nausea, and tachycardia if a patient drinks alcohol.	Concomitant use of alcohol or alcohol-containing preparations or metronidazole; coronary artery disease; severe myocardial disease.	High impulsivity—likely to drink while using it; psychoses (current or history); diabetes mellitus; epilepsy; hepatic dysfunction; hypothyroidism; renal impairment; tubercular contact dermatitis.	Hepatitis; optic neuritis; peripheral neuropathy; psychotic reactions. Pregnancy Category C.	Metallic aftertaste; dermatitis.	Amitypyline; anticoagulants such as warfarin; diazepam; benzocaine; metronidazole; phenytoin; theophylline; warfarin; any nonprescription drug containing alcohol.	Oral dose: 250 mg daily (range 125 mg to 500 mg)
<b>Naltrexone (ReVia®)</b>	Blocks opioid receptors, resulting in reduced craving and reduced reward in response to drinking.	Currently using opioids or in acute opioid withdrawal; anticipated need for opioid analgesics; acute hepatitis or liver failure.	Other hepatic disease; renal impairment; history of suicide attempts. If opioid analgesia is required, larger doses may be required, and respiratory depression may be deeper and more prolonged.	Will precipitate severe withdrawal if patient is dependent on opioids; hepatotoxicity (uncommon at usual doses). Pregnancy Category C.	Nausea; abdominal pain; constipation; dizziness; headache; anxiety; fatigue.	Opioid analgesics (blocks action); yohimbine (use with naltrexone increases negative drug effects).	Oral dose: 50 mg daily
<b>Acamprostate (Campral®)</b>	Affects glutamate and GABA neurotransmission systems, but its alcohol-related action is unclear.	Affects glutamate and GABA neurotransmission systems, but its alcohol-related action is unclear.	Severe renal impairment (CrCl ≤ 30 mL/min).	Moderate renal impairment (dose adjustment for CrCl between 30–50 mL/min); depression or suicidality.	Anxiety; depression. Rare events include the following: suicide attempt; acute kidney failure; heart failure; mesenteric arterial occlusion; cardiovascularly deep thrombophlebitis; and shock. Pregnancy Category C.	Diarrhea; flatulence; nausea; abdominal pain; headache; back pain; infection; flu syndrome; chills; somnolence; decreased libido; anorexia; confusion.	Oral dose: 666 mg (two 333-mg tablets) three times daily or, for patients with CrCl 30–50 mL/min, 333 mg twice daily

# Disulfiram





# Monitored Disulfiram: Randomized studies

Author, Yr	Follow-up	Disulfiram	Abstinence
Gerrein, 1973	85%, 39%	Monitored Unmonitored	40% 7%
Azrin, 1976	90%	Monitored Unmonitored	90-98% 55%
Azrin, 1982	100%	Monitored Unmonitored	73%* 47*
Liebson, 1978	78%	Monitored Unmonitored	98% 79%

Length of follow-up: Gerrein 1973: 8 weeks; Azrin 1976: 2 years,  
Azrin 1982: 6 months; Liebson 1978: 6 months.

\*Thirty-day abstinence at 6 months.

# Prescribing Disulfiram

Disulfiram 250 mg/d-->500 mg/d

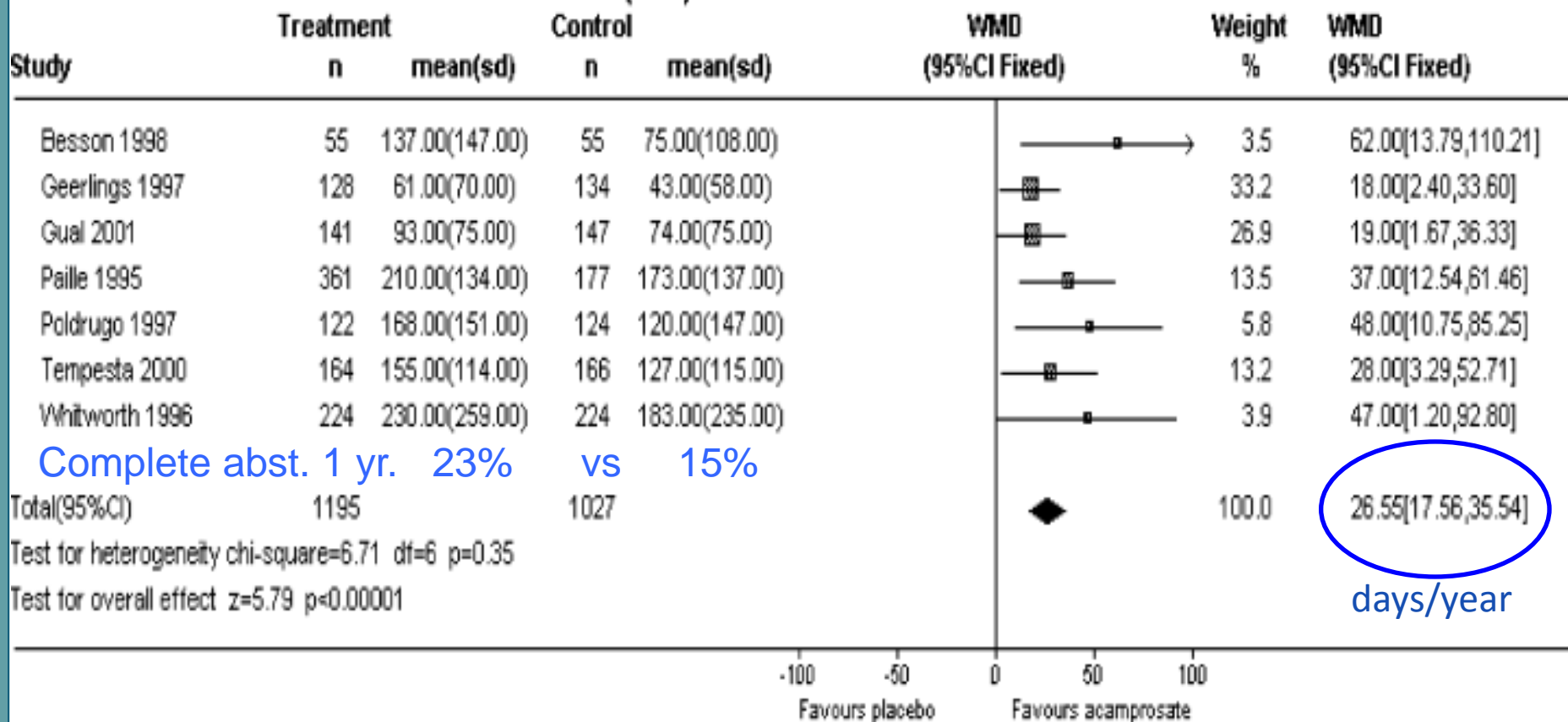
- Main contraindications:  
recent alcohol use, cognitive impairment, risk of harm from disulfiram--ethanol reaction, drug interactions, pregnancy, rubber, nickel or cobalt allergy
- Main side effects:  
hepatitis, neuropathy

# Efficacy of Acamprosate

## “stabilizes activity in the glutamate system”

Comparison: 03 Acamprosate vs Placebo

Outcome: 02 Cumulative abstinence duration (CAD)

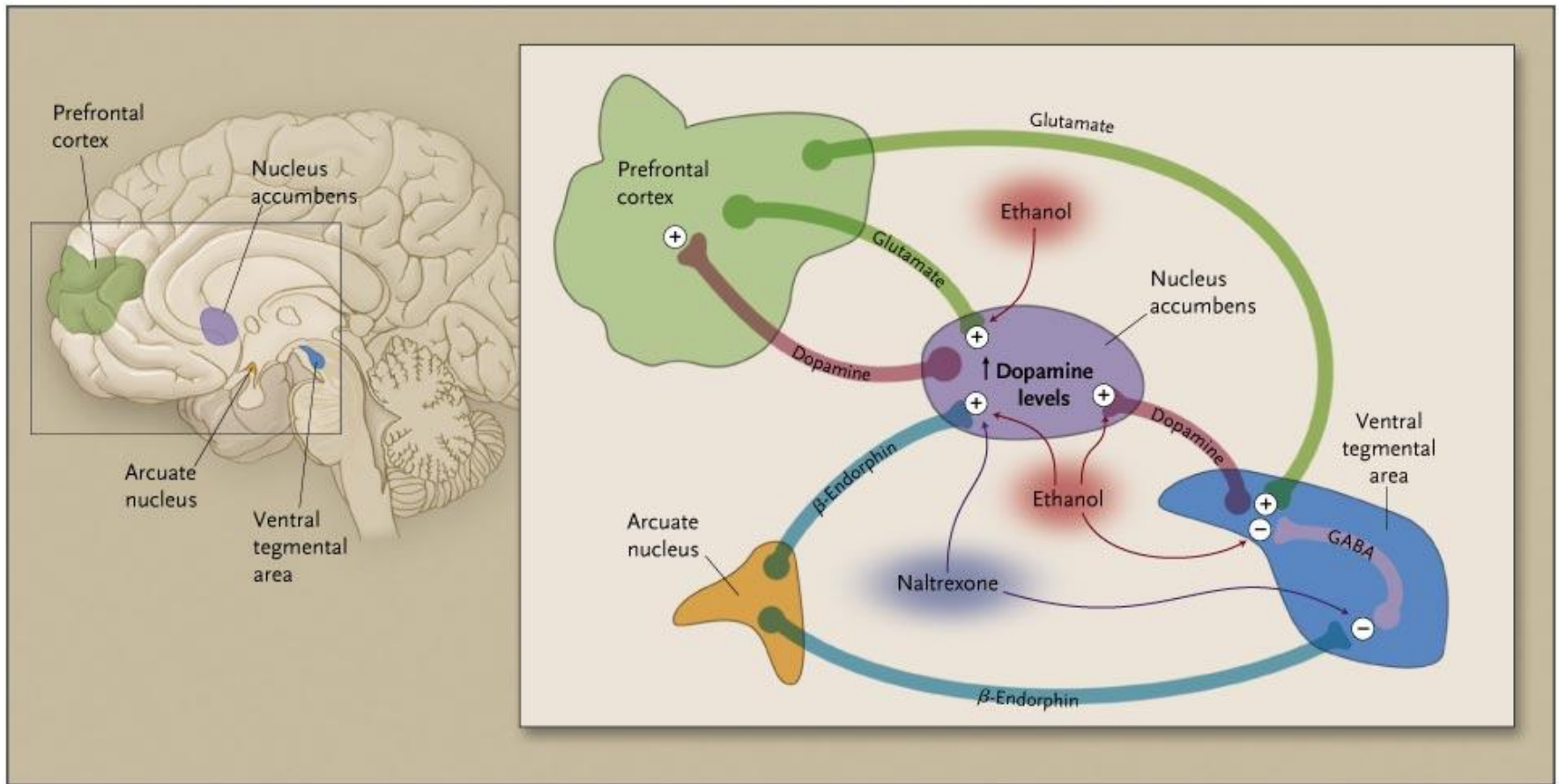


# Prescribing Acamprosate

Acamprosate 666 mg tid

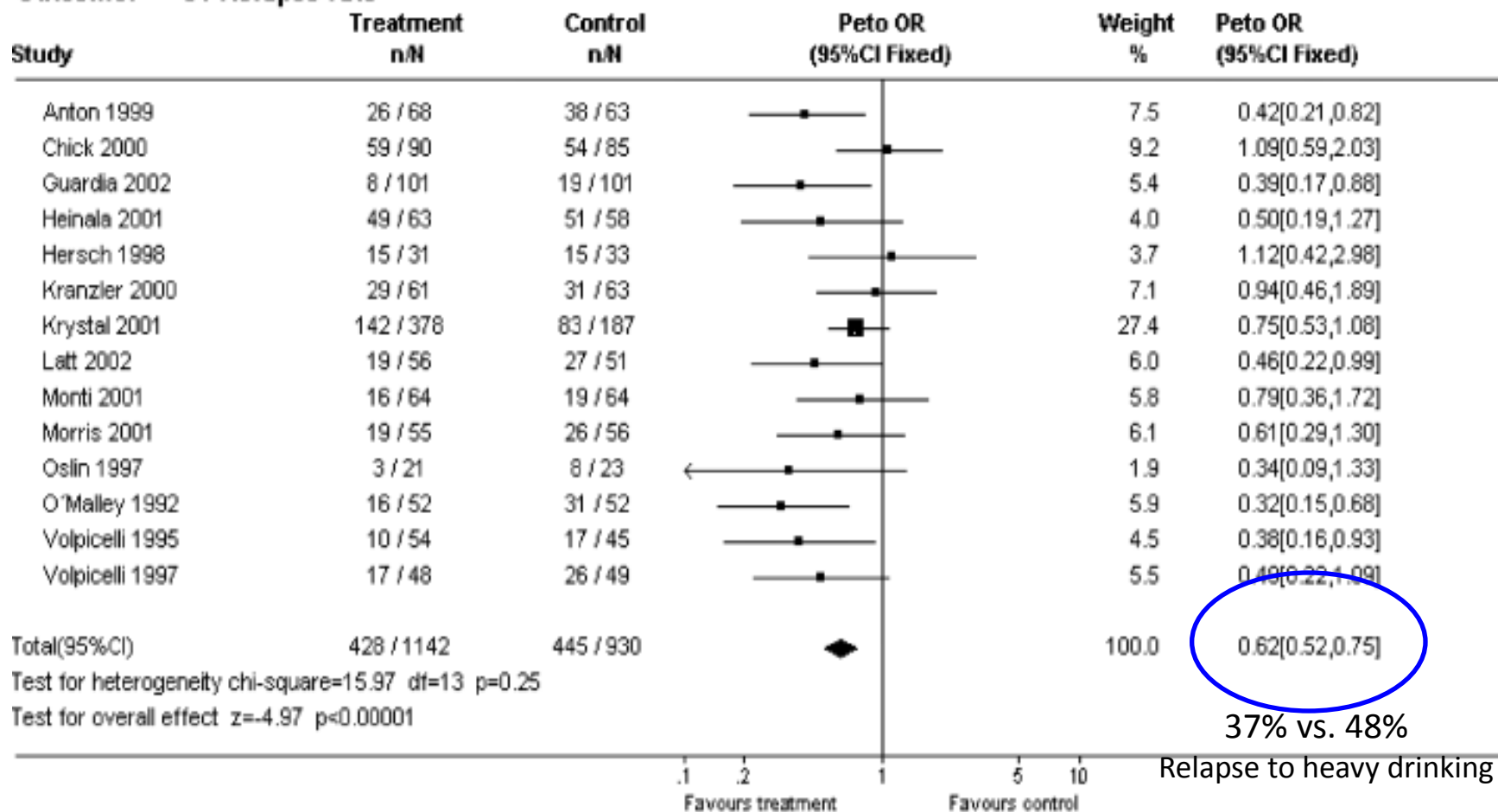
- Main contraindication:  
renal insufficiency
- Main side effect:  
diarrhea; pregnancy category C

# Neurochemical Circuits Involved in Alcohol Dependence and Craving



# Efficacy of Naltrexone

Comparison: 01 Naltrexone  
Outcome: 01 Relapse rate

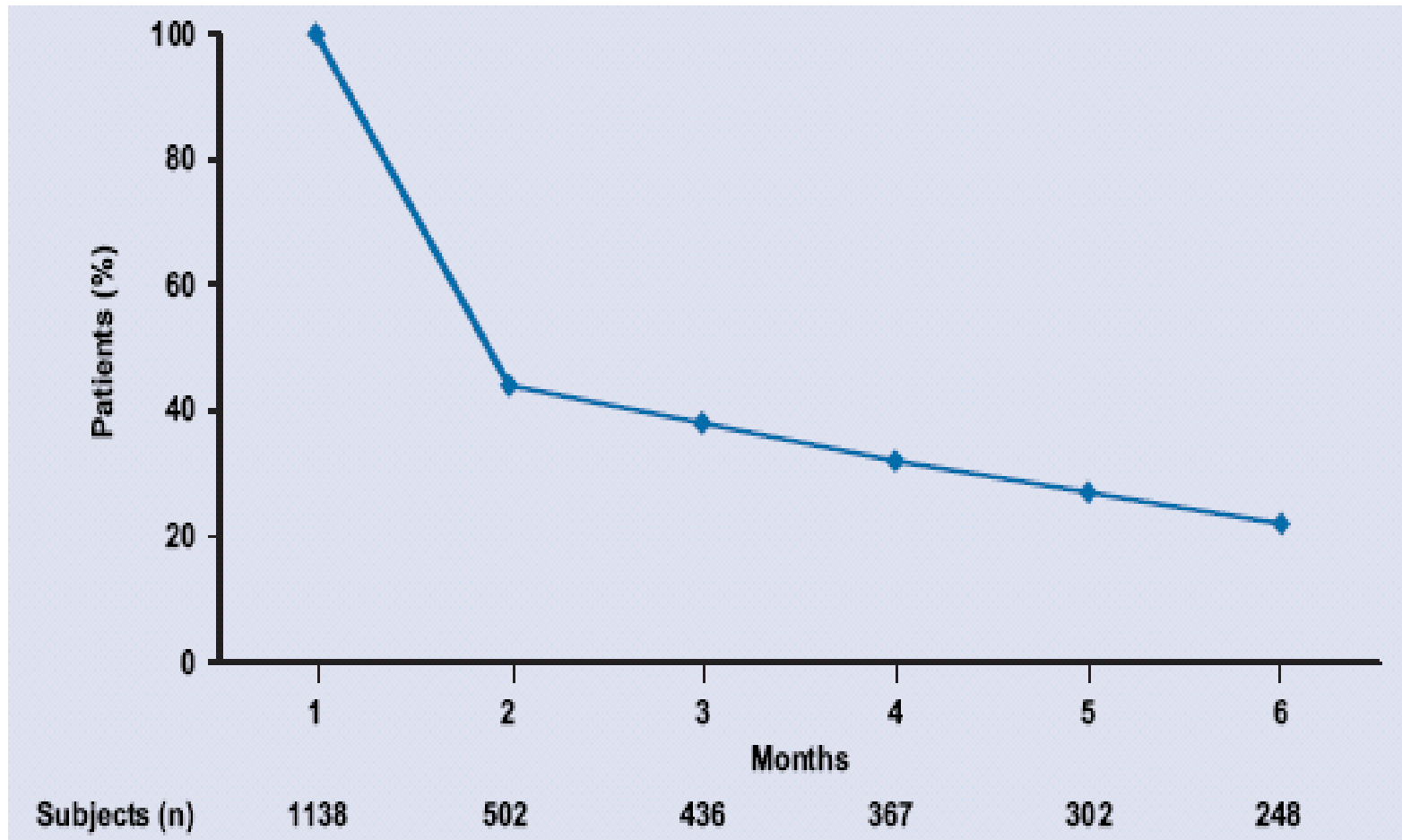


0.62[0.52,0.75]

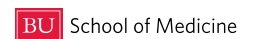
37% vs. 48%

# Receipt of Naltrexone

14% got 80% of a 6-mo course

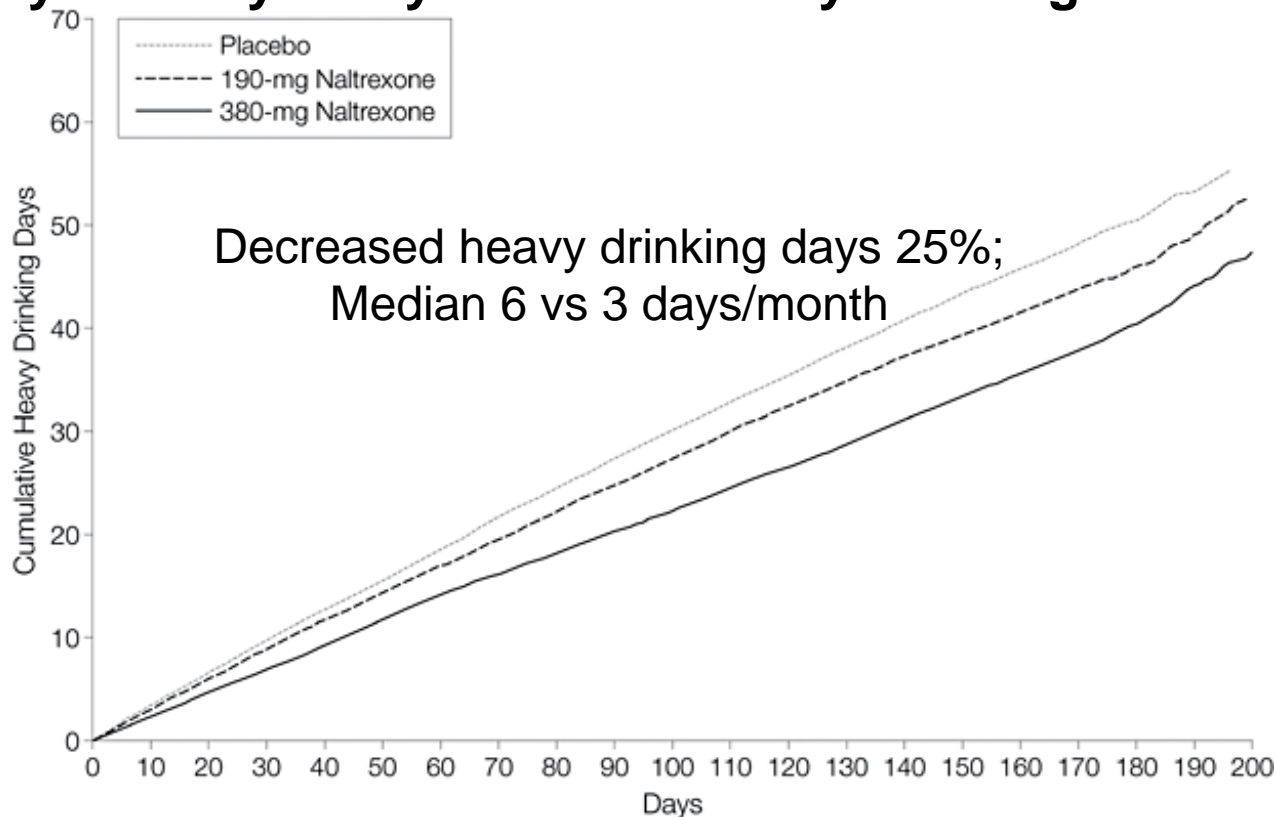


Stephenson JJ et al. (abstract) AAAP 2006.  
Medstat MarketScan Commercial Claims data



# Injectable Naltrexone

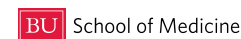
## Primary Efficacy Analysis: Mean Heavy Drinking Event Rate



Treatment Dose	1	2	3	4	5	6
No. of Patients						
Placebo	209	194	169	160	142	134
Naltrexone						
190 mg	210	187	169	156	144	137
380 mg	205	186	161	147	139	130

**JAMA**

Garbutt, J. C. et al. JAMA 2005;293:1617-1625.





# Prescribing Naltrexone

**Naltrexone 12.5 mg/d-->25 mg/d-->50 mg/d or  
380 mg IM per month**

- Main contraindication:  
opiates, pregnancy
- Main side effects:  
nausea, dizziness

# The COMBINE Study

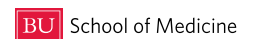
N=1383, 16 wk trial	Good Clinical Outcome %
Medical Management and Placebo	58
Medical Management and Placebo and <b>CBI</b>	71
Medical Management and <b>Naltrexone</b>	74

CBI=Combined Behavioral Intervention

Good Clinical Outcome=Abstinence or drinking moderate amounts without problems.

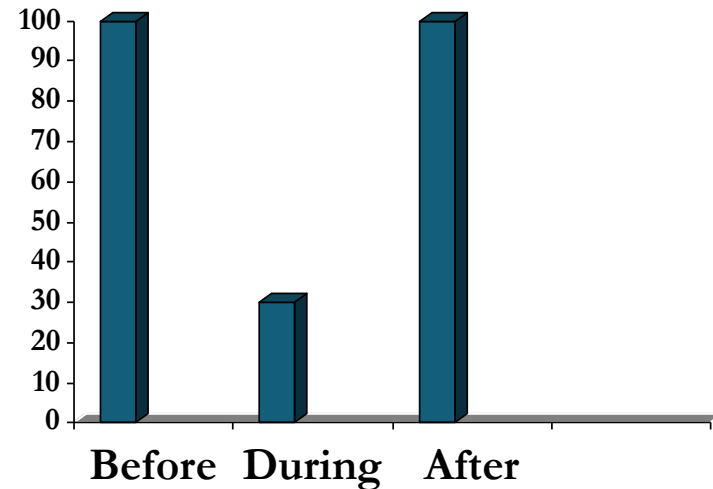
P<0.025 (interaction p-value 0.02)

Anton RF et al. *JAMA* 2006 May 3;295:2003-17  
(NCT00006206)

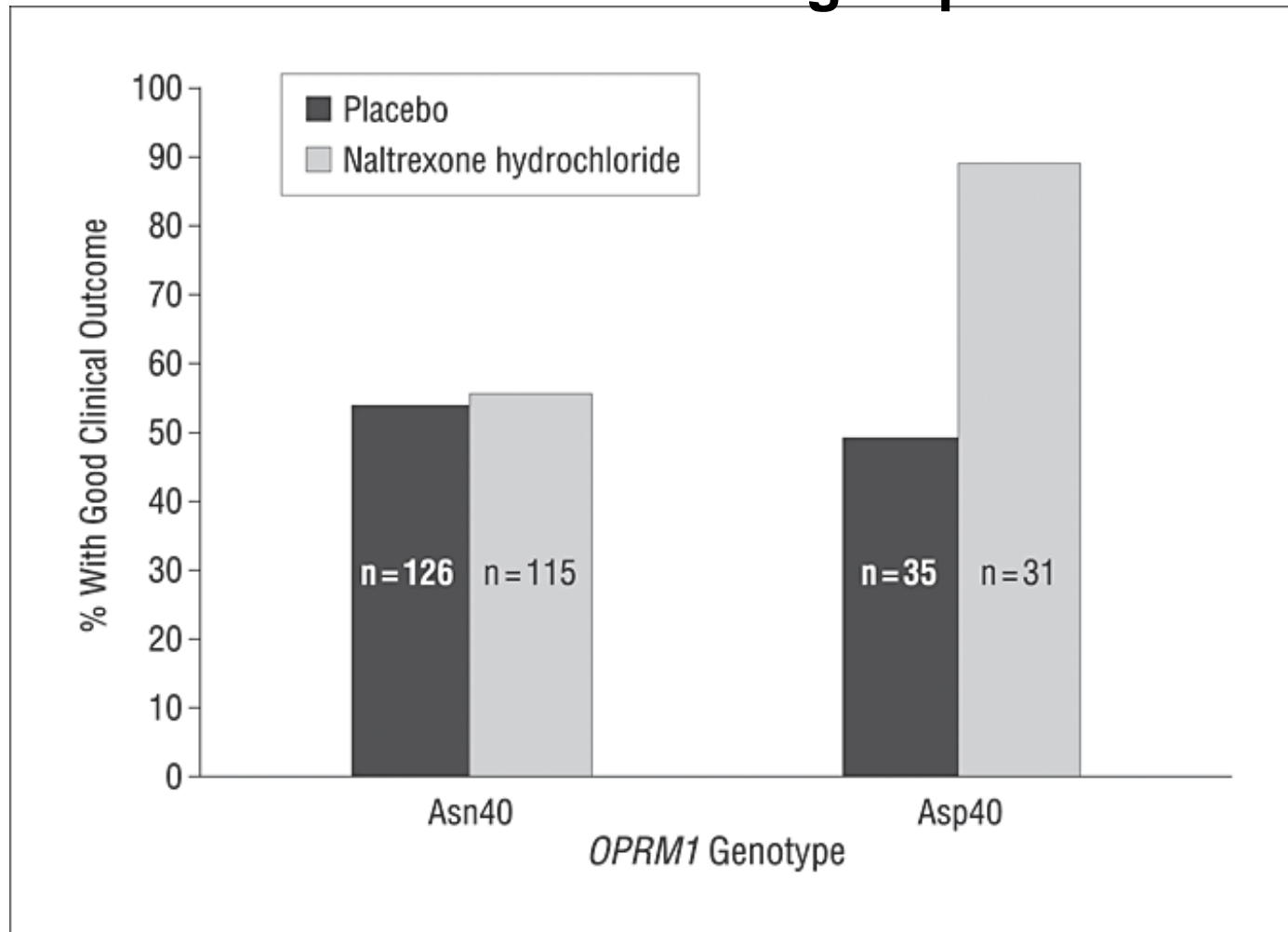


# The COMBINE Study

- One year after treatment ended, the groups did not differ significantly on drinking outcomes
  - Alcohol dependence is an illness that, like other chronic diseases, requires ongoing care



# Good clinical outcome based on OPRM1 and medication group



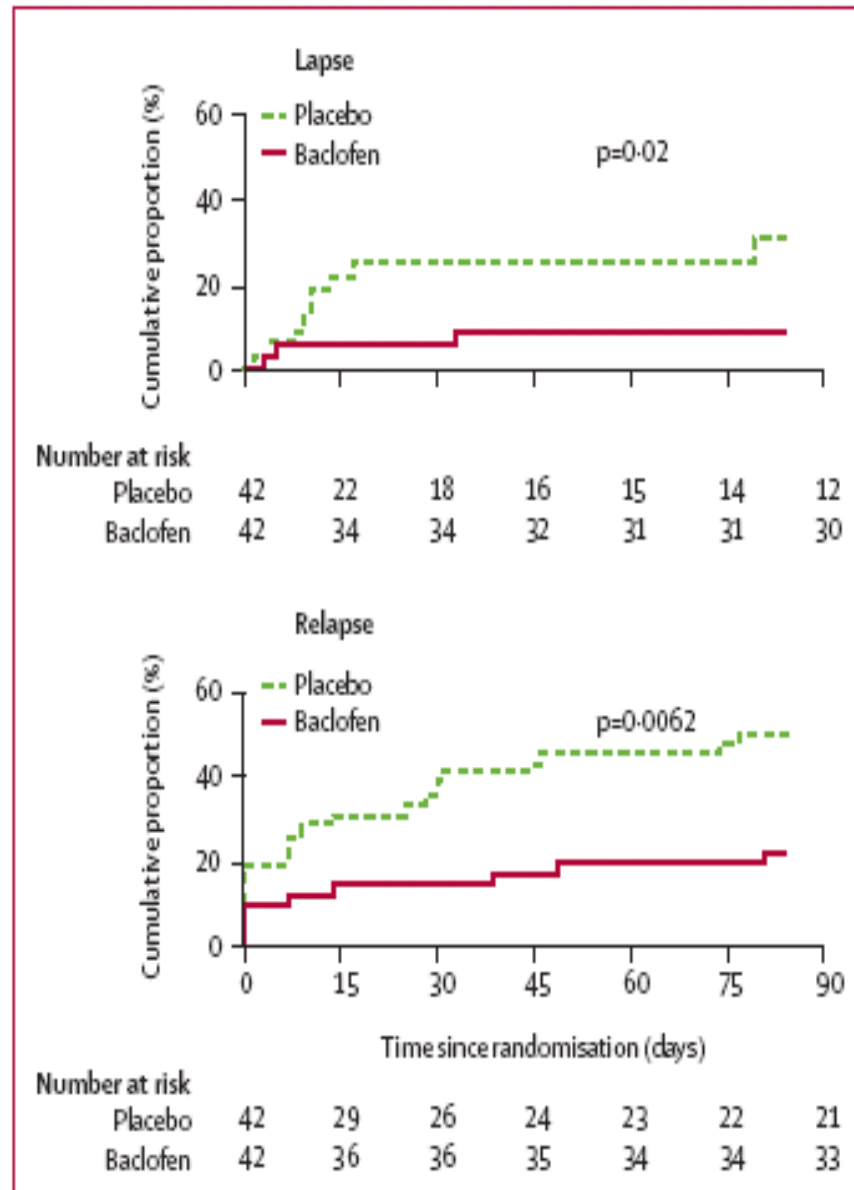
Medical management alone (no CBI). Genotype vs. medication interaction  $p=0.005$

Anton, R. F. et al. Arch Gen Psychiatry 2008;65:135-144.

**Table 3. Difference Between Topiramate and Placebo on Physical and Psychosocial Measures of Health by the Primary (Mixed Model) Analytic Approach<sup>a</sup>**

<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Mean Difference Between Study Groups (95% CI)</b>	<b>Effect Size</b>	<b>P Value</b>
Plasma AST, U/L	4.70 (1.86 to 7.54)	0.30	.001
Plasma ALT, U/L	6.74 (2.99 to 10.49)	0.43	<.001
Plasma log GGT ratio <sup>b</sup>	0.05 (0.03 to 0.08)	0.53	<.001
Plasma bicarbonate, mEq/L	2.50 (1.89 to 3.11)	1.01	<.001
Plasma cholesterol, mg/dL	13.30 (5.09 to 21.44)	0.41	.002
Urine pH	-0.30 (-0.54 to -0.06)	0.32	.01
BMI	1.08 (0.81 to 1.34)	0.91	<.001
Systolic blood pressure, mm Hg	9.70 (6.81 to 12.60)	0.77	<.001
Diastolic blood pressure, mm Hg	6.74 (4.57 to 8.90)	0.73	<.001
Pulse, bpm	1.59 (-0.96 to 4.14)	0.16	.07
Temperature, °C	0.08 (-0.02 to 0.17)	0.18	.92
OCDS total score	3.36 (1.98 to 4.73)	0.62	<.001
CGI-I score	0.63 (0.38 to 0.87)	0.66	<.001
CGI-S score	0.72 (0.39 to 1.06)	0.57	<.001
DrInC-2R Total Consequences scale score	10.08 (5.86 to 14.30)	0.61	<.001

# Baclofen

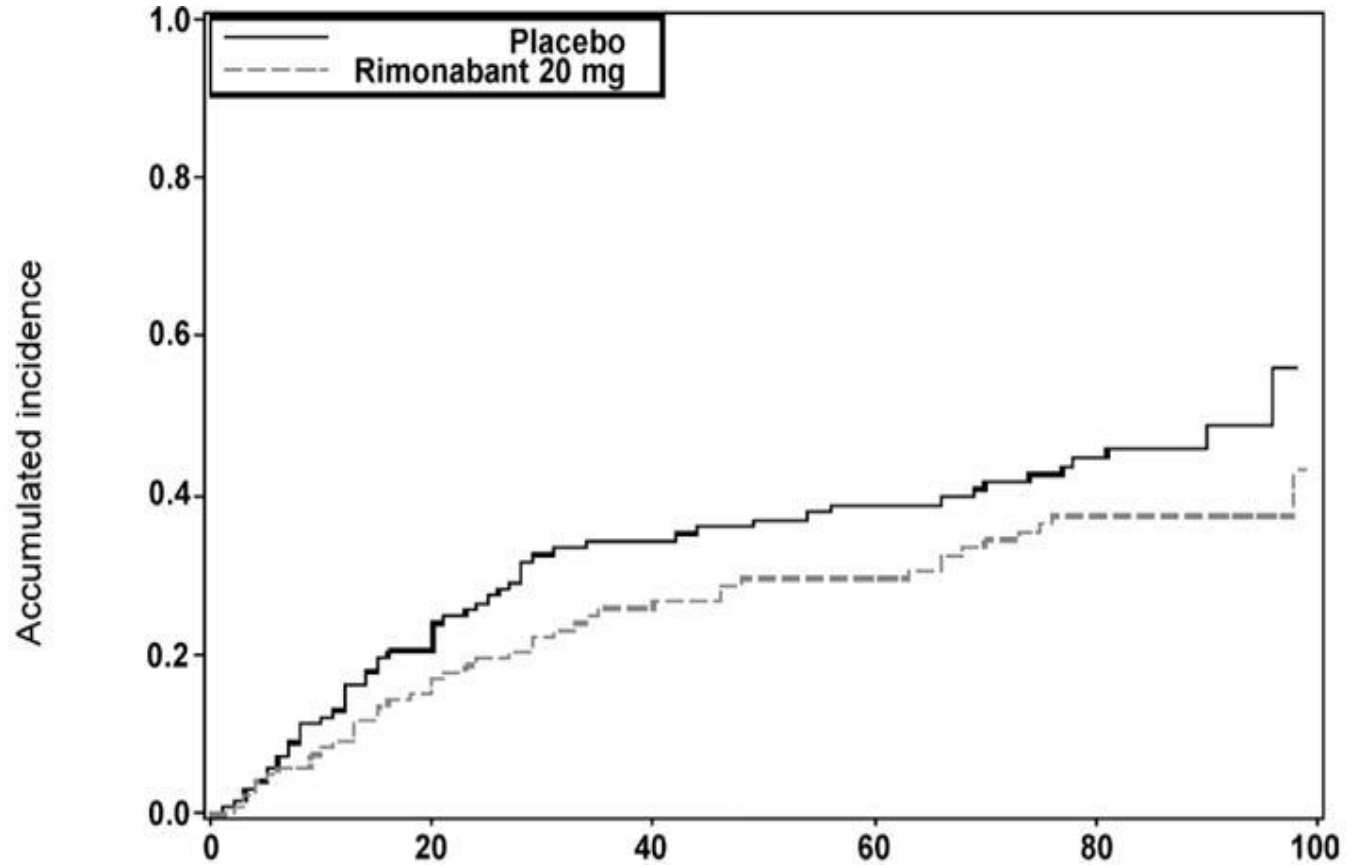


Complete  
Abstinence:  
71% vs. 29%

**Not replicated**

# Rimonabant

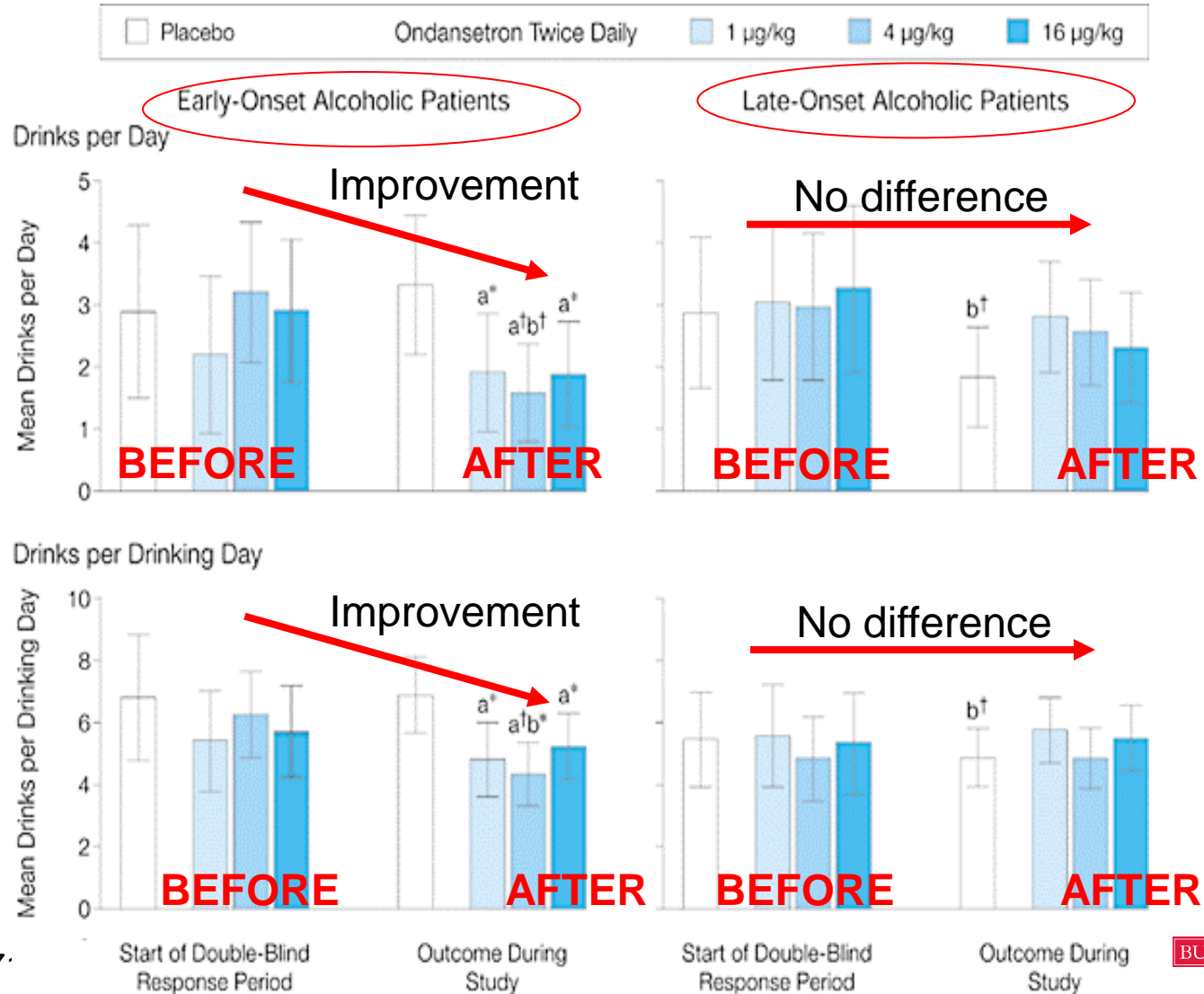
- CB-1 (cannabinoid receptor) blocker
- Less relapse to heavy drinking



Placebo	n	123	93	75	66	53
Rimonabant 20 mg	n	123	97	79	73	62

# Ondansetron

- 5HT3 antagonist



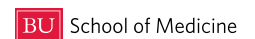
Johnson BA  
et al. JAMA  
2000;284:963-7



# GABAPENTIN

- Phase 2 RCT reduced heavy drinking
  - ?dose
  - ?abuse potential
  - Needs replication

Mason B et al. *JAMA Psychiatry* 2013



# NALMEFENE

- Approved by European Medications Agency 2014
- PRN use reduced heavy drinking

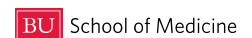
# Pharmacotherapy

- Efficacious though modest; future promise for individualization
- Naltrexone first line (considerations re oral/injectable)
  - Acamprosate tid (renal), disulfiram (monitored)
  - Targeted (vs. daily) may be as effective
- Therapy or medical-type counseling
- Medication treatment of anxiety (buspirone) and depression (fluoxetine) can decrease alcohol consumption

# TREATMENT EFFECTIVENESS

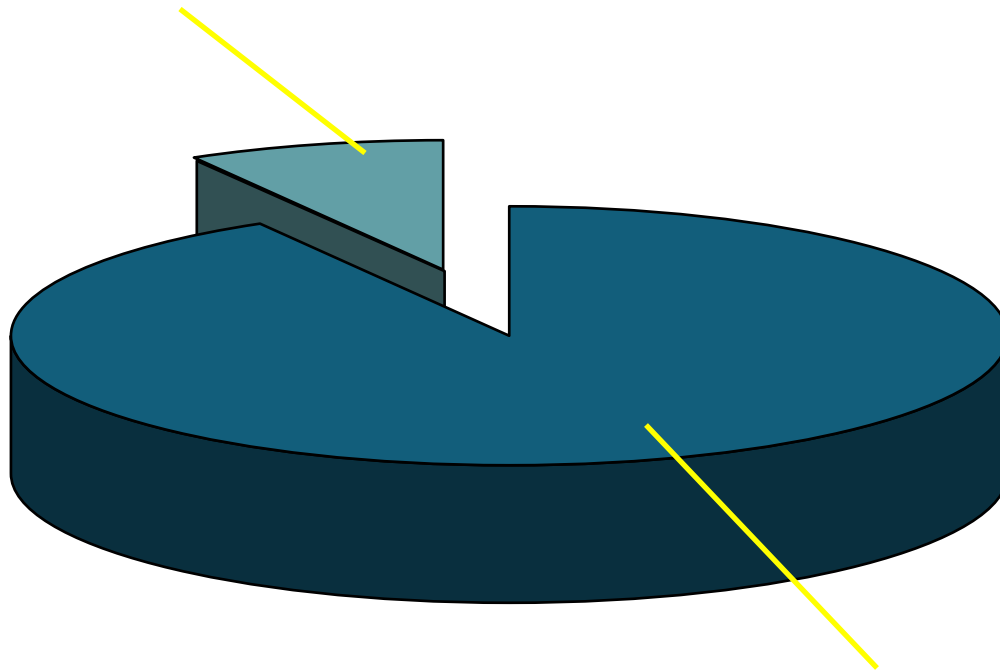
- At one year, 2/3<sup>rds</sup> of patients have a reduction in
  - alcohol consequences (injury, unemployment)
  - consumption (by 50%)
- 1/3<sup>rd</sup> are abstinent or drinking moderately without consequences
- Monetary benefits of alcohol and drug treatment to society outweigh costs 4 to 12-fold (depending on drug and treatment type)

Miller WR et al. J Stud Alcohol 2001;62:211-20  
Anon. Journal of Studies on Alcohol 1997;58:7-29,  
O'Brien CP, McLellan AT. Lancet 1996;347:237-240 and  
JAMA 2000;284:1689-95.



# Alcohol Use Disorder: Treatment Gap

1,600,000 (8%) received treatment

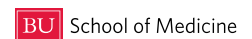


17,900,000 (92%) did not

# Poorest Quality of Care

- 10.5% of recommended care is received by people with alcohol dependence
  - Lowest of 25 conditions (54.9% overall)

• National survey and record review, n=6712  
McGlynn E et al. N Engl J Med 2003;348:2635-2645



# Prescriptions for the 4 FDA approved Rxs

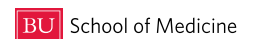
	Disulfiram	Naltrexone	Acamprosate	Injectable naltrexone
Prescriptions	179,000	221,000	306,000	15,000
Cost per rx	\$78	\$100	\$114	\$489

- 9% of the 7.9 million people with alcohol dependence received the equivalent of 1 prescription in a year (720,000 prescriptions)
  - Compared with 170 million antidepressant Rxs
    - 14.8 million people have depression

# Specialty Treatment

- 2 of 175 programs had a physician director
  - **54% have no physician**
  - 34% have a part-time physician
  - 12% have a full-time physician

NSSATS 2002, D'Aunno 2004 & McClellan AT et al. J Subst Abuse Treat 2003





# SUMMARY

- Recognize intoxication, consider differential
- Benzodiazepines for withdrawal
- Brief intervention—to decrease use, consequences, link with or begin treatment
- Prevent relapse
  - Assess
  - Counsel
  - Medications
  - Support (e.g. 12-step)