Medical Xpress

Computer-delivered intervention for alcohol use during pregnancy

October 26 2011

A team of researchers at Wayne State University's Parent Health Lab in the School of Medicine have received a three-year grant to develop a computer-delivered intervention for pregnant women at risk for alcohol use, which can lead to lifelong negative effects on the fetus. Prenatal exposure to alcohol affects attentional, cognitive, social and behavioral functioning and is a major cause of mental retardation. Infants born to African American women are at increased risk of adverse effects.

Screening, brief intervention, and referral for treatment ("SBIRT") approaches to alcohol use during pregnancy can be used by medical staff to identify and reduce alcohol use among pregnant women. SBIRT approaches are not often used, however, because of the amount of time, training, expertise and commitment required. Computer-delivered SBIRT approaches may offer an alternative approach through the use of consistent screening and evidence-based brief interventions at a lower cost, without requiring significant time of medical staff.

With this in mind, the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism of the National Institutes of Health recently funded the "Healthy Pregnancy Study," which will help Steven Ondersma, Ph.D., associate professor of psychiatry and behavioral neurosciences, and colleagues develop and test a highly practical, high-reaching computer-delivered intervention to reduce alcohol use during pregnancy.

Ondersma's study will lay the groundwork for larger-scale investigations of computer-delivered SBIRT for alcohol use during pregnancy.

Ondersma and his team will evaluate the utility of handheld mobile devices and an anonymous self-interview format in screening for at-risk drinking among patients at a prenatal clinic, along with sophisticated interactive intervention software. In addition, the study will examine the validity of the alcohol biomarker, Ethyl Glucuronide (EtG), to indicate alcohol exposure in study participants.

"If our study is successful, health care systems will have the ability to help far more at-risk women through this intervention than previously possible," said Ondersma. "In turn, it may also have a meaningful impact on reducing Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders."

Provided by Wayne State University

Citation: Computer-delivered intervention for alcohol use during pregnancy (2011, October 26) retrieved 5 May 2024 from https://medicalxpress.com/news/2011-10-computer-delivered-intervention-alcohol-pregnancy.html