

Getting young adults to quit smoking: A formative evaluation of the X-Pack Program

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The lack of promising smoking cessation interventions targeting young adults is a recognized public health problem. This study was designed to determine the feasibility of a young-adult-oriented program, the X-Pack Program, when administered to college student smokers, and to estimate its effect on smoking cessation. Participants ($N=83$) were randomized after enrollment to receive either a moderately intensive, E-mail-based, young-adult intervention (the X-Pack group) or a less-intensive program aimed at a general adult audience (the Clearing the Air group). Participants were assessed at baseline and at 3 and 6 months after enrollment. Participants in the X-Pack group rated their treatment more favorably overall, were more engaged in program activities, and quit for more consecutive days at the 3- and 6-month follow-ups, compared with the Clearing the Air group. Differences in quit rates favored the X-Pack group at the two follow-ups, but the differences were not significant. These findings offer some support for the X-Pack Program when administered to college smokers.

Introduction

An estimated 23.6% of young adults aged 18-24 years are current smokers (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2005). Whereas smoking rates continue to decline for adults, they have remained steady for young adults and have increased for some subgroups (CDC, 2005; Lantz, 2003; Wechsler, Rigotti, Gledhill-Hoyt, & Lee, 1998). The high level of smoking among young adults has been partially attributed to the targeted marketing of tobacco products to young adults (Ling & Glantz, 2004; Sepe, Ling, & Glantz, 2002).

Few smoking cessation programs are aimed at young adults (Abrams et al., 2003; Curry et al., 2007). In a nationally representative survey of smoking cessation programs that serve adolescents and young adults, only 5.6% were found to serve primarily young adults (Curry et al., 2007). Of young

adult programs that have been evaluated (Ames et al., 2005; Escoffery, McCormick, & Bateman, 2004; Klesges et al., 2006; Obermayer, Riley, Asif, & Jean-Mary, 2004; O'Neill, Gillispie, & Slobin, 2000; Rutter, 1990), a handful have been successful in promoting smoking cessation (Klesges et al., 2006; Obermayer et al., 2004; Rutter, 1990). These studies are limited in their reliance on informal designs that lack randomization or a control group (Obermayer et al., 2004; Rutter, 1990) and in their use of self-report of smoking status without biochemical validation (Klesges et al., 2006; O'Neill et al., 2000). These studies also are limited in their generalizability, as participants consist largely of college students (exceptions include Ames et al., 2005, and Klesges et al., 2006). The lack of promising interventions targeting young adults is a recognized public health problem (Abrams et al., 2003; Backinger, Fagan, Matthews, & Grana, 2003; Curry, 2003; Lantz, 2003; Orleans et al., 2003).

Young adulthood represents a distinct developmental period of the life course (Arnett, 2000). Young adults face unique challenges associated with the transition to independent living, job and career selection, partner selection, and parenthood (Arnett, 2000; Goldscheider & Goldscheider, 1999). Young

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