

Improving the Screening and Management of Alcohol Use Disorders (AUDs) Among the Elderly in Thermopolis, WY

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Hypothesis

Use of age-appropriate screening tools and treatments will decrease incidence and improve management of AUDs in the geriatric population of Thermopolis, WY.



Hot Springs in Thermopolis, WY

Background

- Population ~2,700 with 47% over the age of 50
- Thermopolis has the 3rd highest proportion of alcohol-related hospitalizations in WY
- Ages 50-64 are the most hospitalized for alcohol use in WY

Community Involvement

- Much of the geriatric population resides at the Wyoming Pioneer Home or Thermopolis Rehab & Wellness (nursing home)
- High Country Behavioral Health provides substance use

Drink Diary								
Week Commencing:	When/Time	Where	Who With	Type/Cost	Actual Units	Target Units	Thoughts and Mood Beforehand	Consequences/Comments
Monday								
Tuesday								
Wednesday								
Thursday								
Friday								
Saturday								
Sunday								
TOTALS								

KNOW YOUR LIMIT
How Many Is Too Many?

What counts as one drink, and how many can an older adult have? An older adult should have **NO MORE** than 7 drinks a week, and **NO MORE** than 3 drinks in a day. And when they are drinking, **NO MORE** than one alcoholic drink per hour. One drink is equal to:

- One 12 ounce bottle/can of beer or wine cooler.
- One 8 to 9 ounce bottle/can of malt liquor.
- One 5 ounce glass of wine.
- One 1.5 ounce shot of hard liquor (spirits), 40 proof. Examples of spirits are whiskey, gin, vodka, and rum.

Depending on your health, it may be better to not drink at all, especially if you're taking medications.

TIPS TO LIMIT ALCOHOL INTAKE

- Remove all alcohol from your home. Only drink during special occasions.
- Avoid drinking when you're upset or angry.
- Don't drink on an empty stomach.
- Sip alcoholic drinks slowly, and try to alternate alcoholic drinks with non-alcoholic beverages.
- Politely say "no thanks" when offered a drink if you're not your limit.

SOBERING UP!
Getting Help

If you, or someone you know, has a problem with alcohol, don't worry, it's not too late to get help. Talk with family and friends, or with a counselor who deals with alcohol problems. Try to stay away from places you used to drink or people you used to drink with. There are many support groups for older adults with alcohol problems, like Alcoholics Anonymous (www.aa.org). Call your doctor or a senior center near you to find places that can help.

ALCOHOL & Older Adults

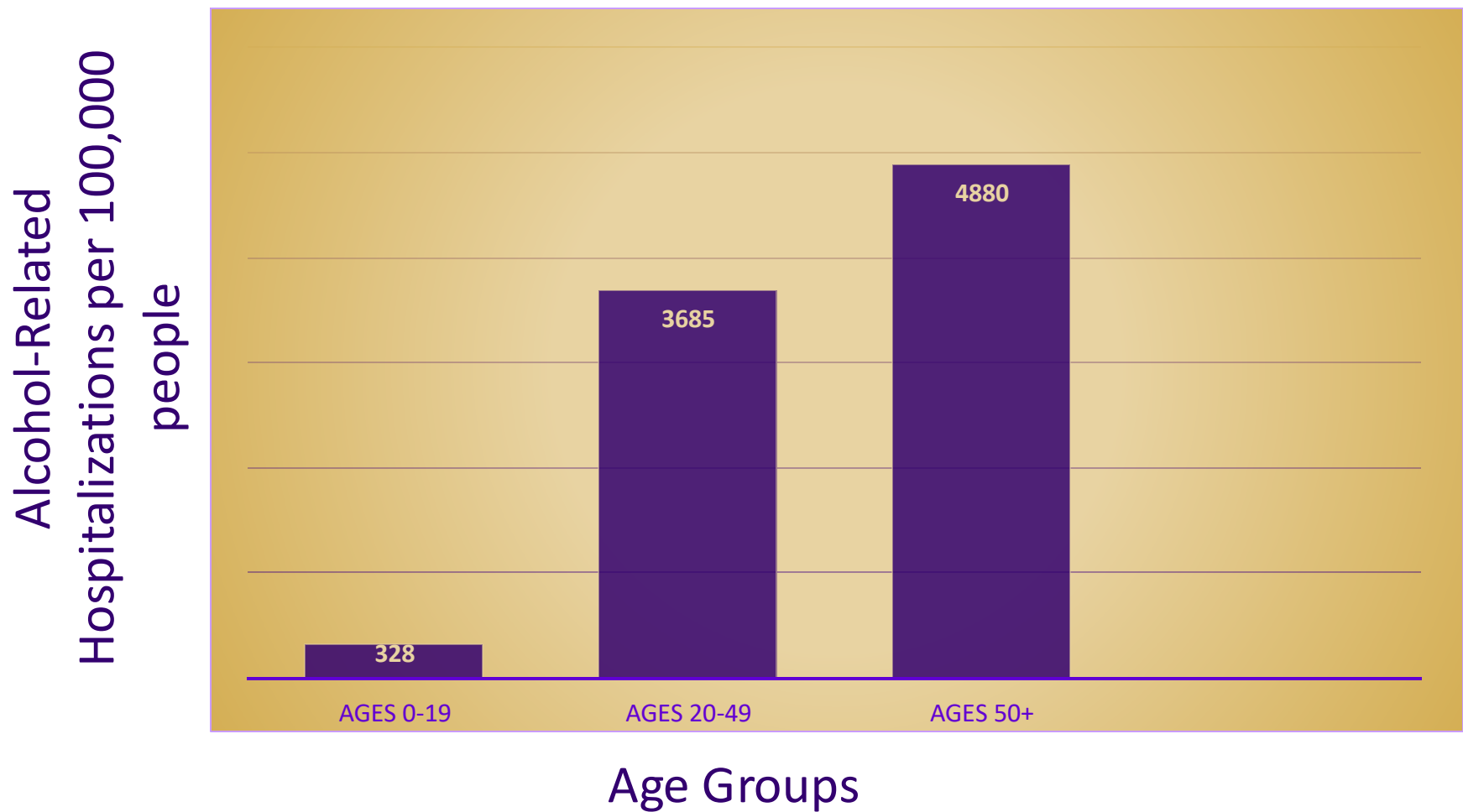
Know the Risks

Example of drinking diary and alcohol use brochure for older adults

Integrated Review

- Older adults are at risk for excessive alcohol use due to lifestyle, grief, chronic conditions, etc. and older adults are less likely to be screened for substance use disorders
- SAMHSA recommends the SMAST-G tool to screen the elderly for AUDs
- Multi-component interventions have been shown to decrease alcohol use in the elderly by up to 79%
- Informational brochures, drinking diaries, telephone counseling, and direct physician advice

Alcohol-Related Hospitalizations in WY



Conclusions

- Educate healthcare providers regarding screening for AUDs in older populations
- Provide materials for management such as drinking diaries and brochures to elderly care facilities and clinic/hospital
- Regularly scheduled counseling for those with AUDs would be ideal, though difficult to implement as it may require a new job position
- Track monthly rates of material distribution and quarterly alcohol-related hospitalizations



Wyoming Pioneer Home