

Title: Helping others and long-term outcomes: A 10 year follow-up study in Project MATCH.

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Summary:

Most treatment programs encourage AA participation, and AA-related helping (AAH) is associated with reducing the risk of relapse early following treatment. However, little is known about alcoholics' long-term patterns of AAH, and how these behaviors relate to drinking and other-oriented behaviors over time. This study applies fixed effects regression modeling to 10-year follow-up data of 148 Project MATCH clients recruited in Albuquerque, NM. Follow-up assessments were conducted at 3, 9, 15, 39, and 120 months after intake. Fixed effects regressions controlled for AA attendance and step-work to identify the unique link between AAH and two subsequent outcomes: percent days abstinent (PDA) and interest in others (IIO). There were no significant differences between the study sample and the 78 individuals with incomplete follow-up data in background characteristics or prior AA-exposure. Results showed a relatively constant rate of AAH (9%) at each follow-up assessment with the lowest rate (4%) at the 15-month assessment. A significant time by AAH interaction ($p < .01$) revealed a significantly stronger link between AAH/increased PDA at the 9-month and 39-month assessments ($p < .05$) in comparison to the 15-month assessment ($p = .24$). A significant main effect for AAH was found in relation to increased IIO ($p < .05$). Although AA meeting attendance declined over time for the sample, a significant link between higher AA meeting attendance/increased PDA was consistently found across time ($p < .001$). A significant time by step-work interaction ($p < .01$) revealed a significant link between increased step-work/increased PDA at the 39-month assessment. Findings suggest that, in later years following an index treatment episode, participation in AAH and step-work may be more important to reduced drinking, suggesting AA-related mechanisms may vary over the course of long-term recovery.

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