

Study: Recovering Alcoholics Effective in Helping Others

A new report shows that people in recovery can help hospitalized alcoholics by encouraging them to quit drinking and enter counseling, Reuters reported June 11, 2001.

"A recovering alcoholic can help alcoholics who are still suffering from the disease, because the patients relate to them," said Dr. Richard D. Blondell, an addiction-medicine specialist at the University of Louisville School of Medicine in Kentucky. "The patients credit the visitor as the main thing that motivated them."

The study included 140 patients who were hospitalized for alcohol-related incidents. One group received standard medical care, a second group received medical care plus a 15-minute intervention by a trained addiction specialist, and the third group received medical care, intervention, and an in-depth talk with a recovering alcoholic.

Researchers found that 59 percent of those who met with recovering alcoholics abstained from drinking for six months after the incident, compared to 44 percent of those who received addiction counseling alone, and one-third of those who only received medical care.

In addition, half the patients who met with recovering alcoholics had entered some form of treatment, compared with only 15 percent of those who received medical treatment and counseling by an addiction specialist.

The study is published in the May 2001 issue of the Journal of Family Practice.