

Wired for Healthy College: Electronic-Intervention for Addressing Substance Abuse Prevention

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Dear Editor,

Providing easier and more flexible learning, development of the World Wide Web has opened a new horizon in education, which could overcome the limitations of traditional methods of teaching; consequently, development of technology created the possibility of every hour and everywhere education based on the needs of learners (1). In other words, learning should be available all the time, with ability to stay home, and according to everybody's needs to learn (2). Advantages of electronic-learning can be cited as: not entail an expert to supply the program; removal of physical, socio-economic and environmental limitations whilst potentially engaging large numbers of individuals; save time and reduction in costs (3). In high-risk behavior prevention, web-based intervention, also, could be a convenient solution for all fears of stigmatization or shame about that behavior (4). While full ambiguity may not almost be accomplished (for example, users may require a login and password to access the program), several users find it easier to reveal information concerning themselves through a computer, with absence of face-to-face interview and decrease of social desirability and pressure for a user to respond in a particular way (3). However, it should be mentioned that web-based education include some limitations and demerits, such as learners low level of knowledge on computers, lack of equipment and infrastructure, technology limitations and no access to the internet, problems with the internet bandwidth, and also problems with learner assessment (5). Though, considering huge number of merits mentioned on that, it seems to be efficient to plan preventive interventions for risky behaviors (6-11). For example, Lockyer et al. in

their study on e-learning indicated that web-based education for HIV prevention is more effective compared with face-to-face classroom education (6). Presented advantages of web-based programs, today, has caused a convenient method to access information, and prevent interventions in the risky behaviors such as drug abuse; that could be cost effective (7, 8). Furthermore, Gagnon et al. (9) mentioned that the safe injection program among injection drug users, was effective to avoid diseases, such as ADIS and hepatitis B among the group in risk; they, also, developed a web-based education program to enhance safe injection (using a new syringe each time injecting) among Canadian addicts; their results showed that experiment group used significantly fewer contaminated syringes in comparison with control group at the end of the intervention. Moreover, Miranda et al. (10) reported the efficiency of web-based education interventions on safe sex behaviors. Efficiency of electronic-health interventions in preventive programs on alcohol consumption among college students has been reported accordingly, and it has been considered as an effective approach to plan preventive interventions to risk behavior (11). College students, especially in primary years entering university, are considered as one of the at risk groups of drug abuse for variety of reasons, such as entering a new stage of life, separation from the family, and peer norm; it results in serious problems such as health consequence, academic failure, and social difficulties (12). Considering the usefulness of web-based training, designing and implementing electronic-intervention for drug abuse prevention among college students is recommended.

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Authors' Contributions

Farzad Jalilian, Ahmad Ali Eslami and Mehdi Mirzaei Alavijeh developed the original idea and the protocol of this study. Mohammad Ahmadpanah and Behzad Karami Matin participated in study design. Motahereh Khalvandi participated in data collection. All authors provided comments and approved the final manuscript.

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