

Acceptability of brief alcohol interventions among women and racial/ethnic minority Veterans in primary care

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Background

- Brief alcohol interventions (BAIs) delivered in primary care settings are efficacious for addressing hazardous drinking^{1,2}.
- There are numerous barriers to implementing BAIs, and patients consistently rate alcohol as a lower priority than other health concerns^{3,4}.
- Patients find BAIs acceptable retrospectively⁵, but less is known about patients' prospective acceptability.
- This knowledge gap is of particular concern regarding women and racial/ethnic minority individuals^{6,7}.
- Preferences for specialty substance abuse services have been identified among women and racial/ethnic minority patients⁶, suggesting that preferences for BAIs among these individuals may also be important to consider.

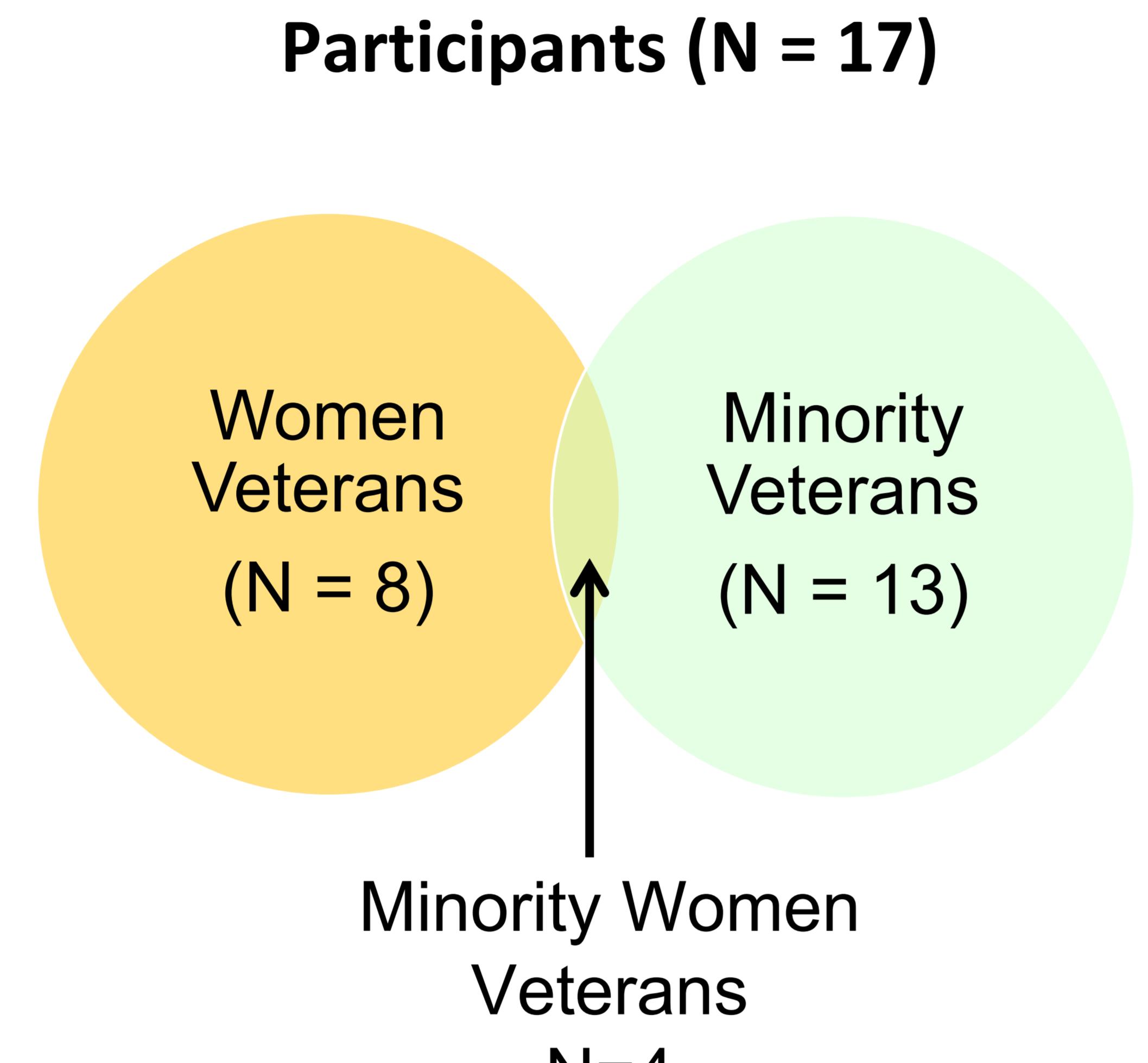
Study Aims

To understand how to tailor BAIs to fit with preferences of women and racial/ethnic minorities, we conducted qualitative interviews with women and racial/ethnic minority VA primary care patients who screened positive for at-risk drinking. Our primary research aims were:

- Evaluate prospective acceptability of BAIs among women and racial/ethnic minority patients
- Identify specific modifiable factors that can be tailored to increase receptivity of BAIs for women and racial/ethnic minorities

Method

- We conducted semi-structured qualitative interviews with a purposive sample of 17 Veterans who were women and/or racial ethnic minorities
- Interview questions, were guided by the Theoretical Framework of Acceptability⁸.
- Participants rated their receptivity and affective attitude to BAIs on a 10-point scale.
- We used rapid qualitative analysis techniques including structured templates and matrix displays to examine qualitative data



Receptivity to BAIs

Patient-Centeredness.

- Many Veterans emphasized that factors that may increase receptivity depend on the patient and several emphasized that it is ultimately up to them whether they will be receptive to a BAI or make changes with their drinking.

Specific Factors Affecting Receptivity to BAIs

- Conversation should be relevant to the patient and their specific health concerns
- Participants emphasized making the intervention "relevant to me" and "specific to my situation"
- Provider showing concern and paying attention is important
- Comfort with provider was also identified as an important factor by many participant
- Make it conversational
- Providers should avoid making patients feel blamed or judged

Results

Summary of Acceptability Results

- Participants reported having moderately positive affective attitude toward BAIs ($M = 6.76, SD = 1.98$) and receptivity to BAIs ($M = 7.53, SD = 1.84$) on a 1-10 scale.
- Qualitative responses indicated that most participants had generally positive (52.9%) or neutral (41.2%) impressions of BAIs.
- Most participants did not find BAIs burdensome (82.3%) or felt neutrally about them (11.8%).
- Most participants felt that BAIs fit with their value system (82.3%) and thought that BAIs would be effective (76.5%).

Figure 1. Description of Brief Alcohol Intervention Provided to Participants

"Imagine that a member of your primary care team speaks to you during your routine appointment after completing your normal screening for alcohol use. They share information about how alcohol use affects your specific health concerns (such as diabetes or high blood pressure) and how alcohol impacts other common issues (such as sleep, weight, pain, or stress). "

Discussion

- Women and racial/ethnic minority Veterans generally found brief alcohol interventions to be acceptable and participants identified several factors that can serve to increase their receptivity to BAIs.
- The specific factors identified are generally consistent with previous research on patient preferences in primary care with regard to behavioral health treatment⁹.
- These results emphasize that the "how" of BAIs matters in addition to their content, as emphasized by participants' preference for a conversational tone and providers who show genuine concern.
- Results also highlight the importance of tailoring BAIs to be relevant to patients' specific health concerns, something that is not included in many brief interventions for alcohol use

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