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# **Can electronic feedback reduce student alcohol intake?**

## **A multi-site investigation of Unitcheck**

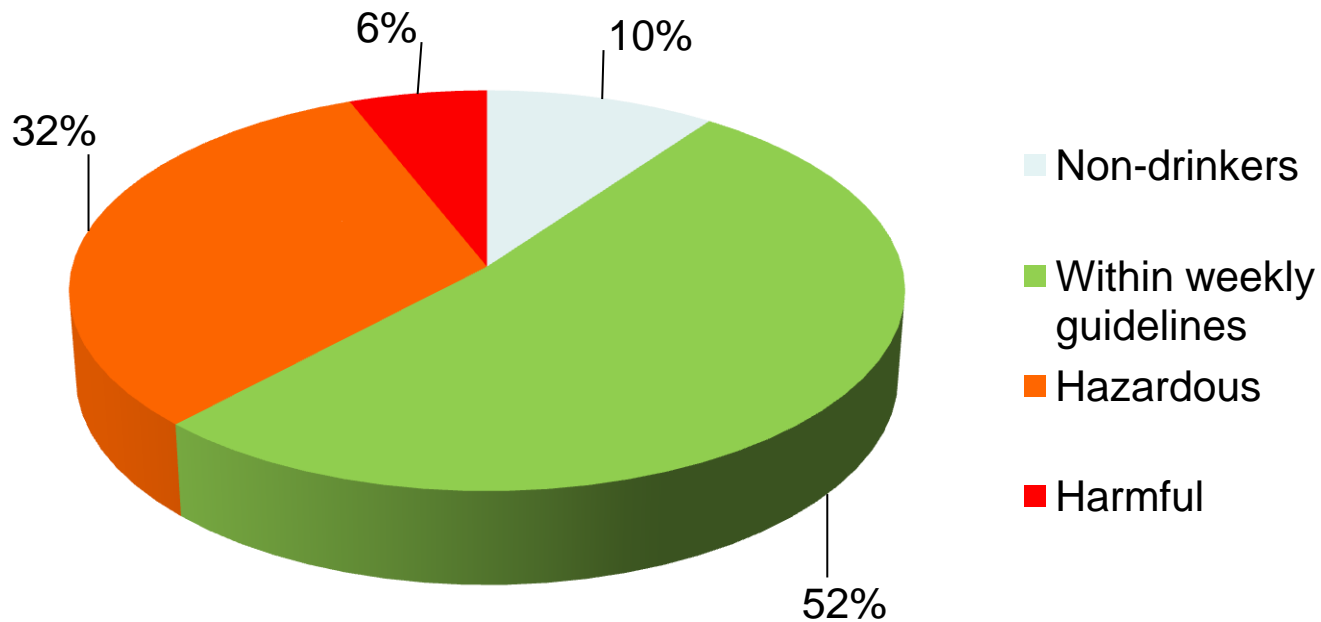
Bridgette M Bewick, Brendan Mulhern and Andrew J Hill

E-Mental Health Summit

October 2009



How much do students drink?



n=7542

year 1 n=3068, year 2 n=2444, year 3 n=2030

Bewick et al. (2008) BMC Public Health 8:163

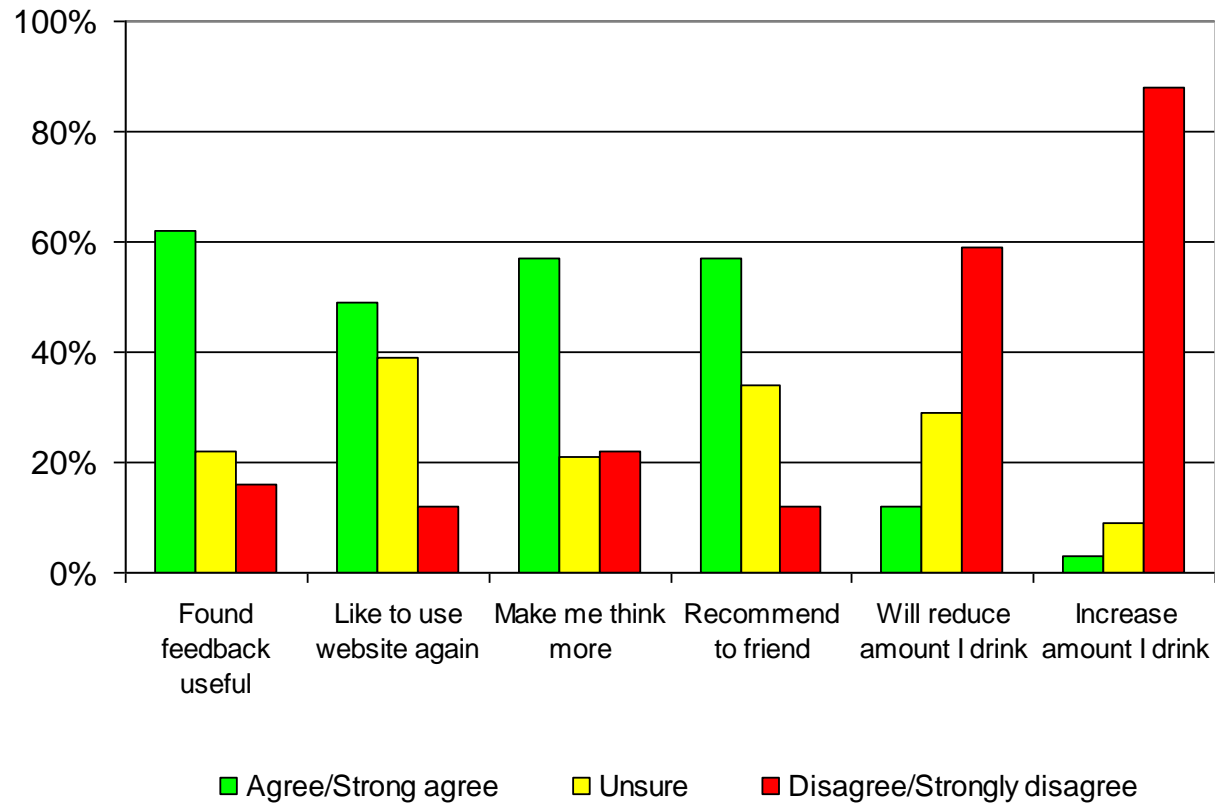


Could a web-based approach work?

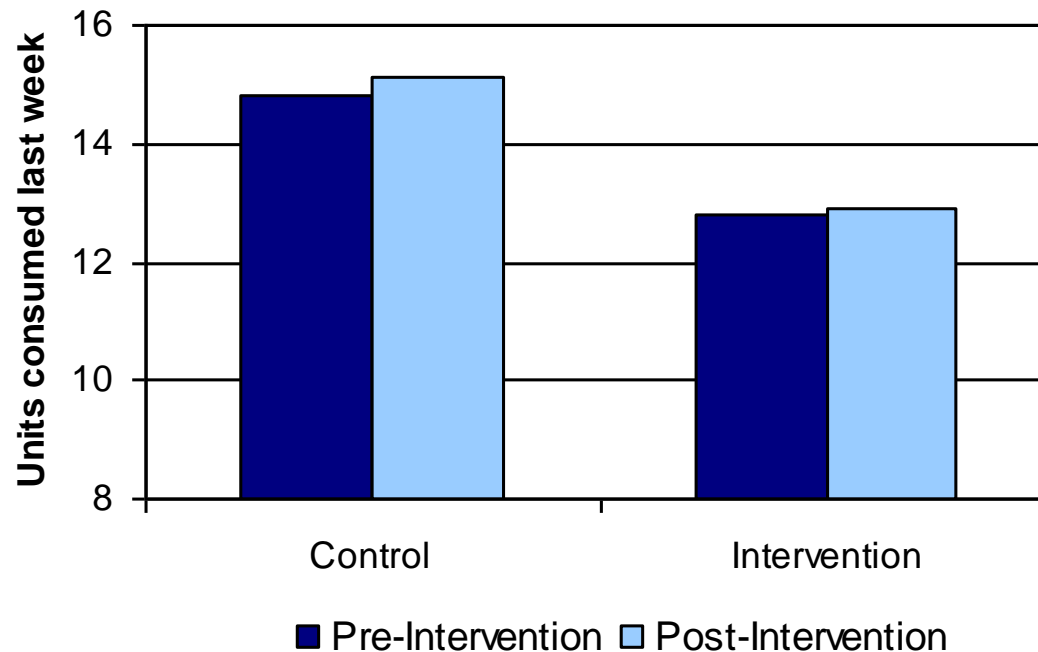
## Personalised feedback

- ▶ Alcohol consumption
  - Units consumed per week
  - Number of alcohol free days
  - Binge drinking behaviour
  
- ▶ Social norms
  - The percentage of students who drink less than them
  - Perceived negative effects of alcohol perceived by other students who consume a similar amount of alcohol.
  
- ▶ Information on support services

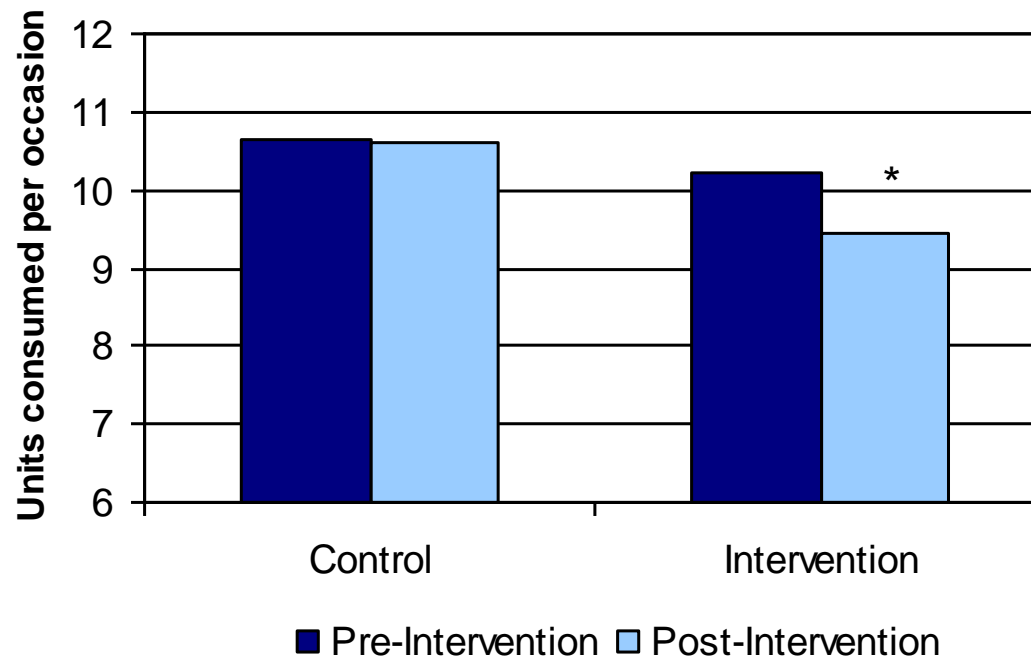
## What did students think?



## Was there a change in consumption per week?



## Was there a change in consumption per occasion?

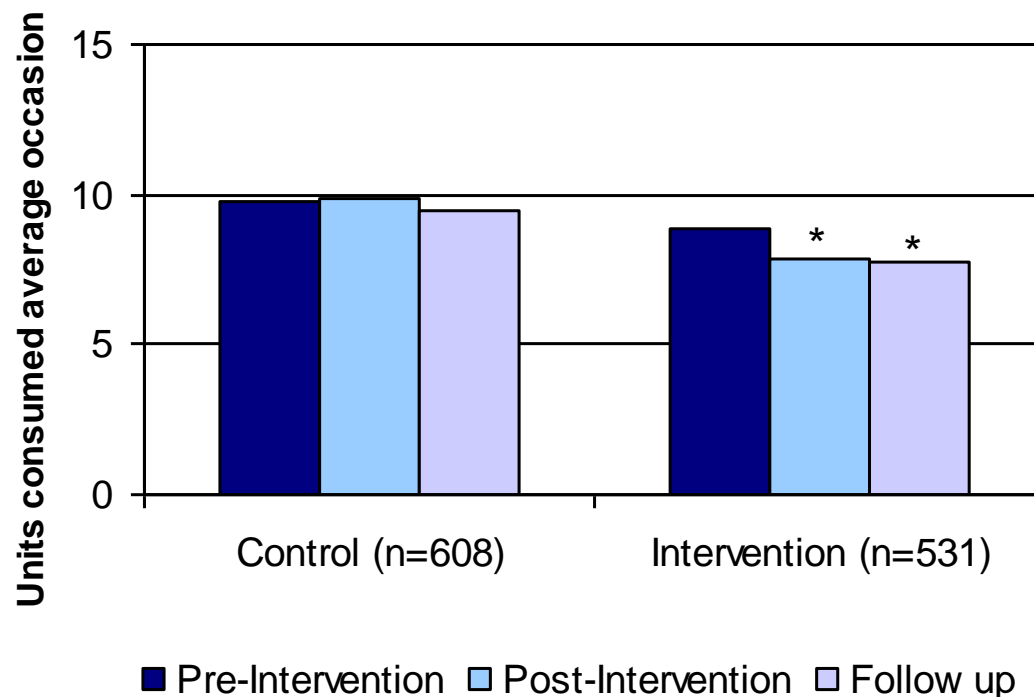




Could these findings be replicated?



## Unitcheck Study 2: Preliminary results





What about outside of University of Leeds?



Unitcheck - Microsoft Internet Explorer

File Edit View Favorites Tools Help

Back Forward Stop Home Search Favorites Media Print Mail News RSS Feeds

Google student drinking Go Bookmarks 712 blocked Check AutoLink AutoFill Send to Settings

Search the Web Search Address http://www.unitcheck.co.uk/

You are not logged in

### Do you know how much other students drink?

- See how many units are in the alcohol you drink.
- Check if the amount you're drinking is risky for your health.
- See how many other university students drink a similar amount to you.

Enter the email address you provided when you recently completed the Unitcheck student alcohol consumption questionnaire.

**register**

Forgotten which email address you used?

#### What if I don't drink?

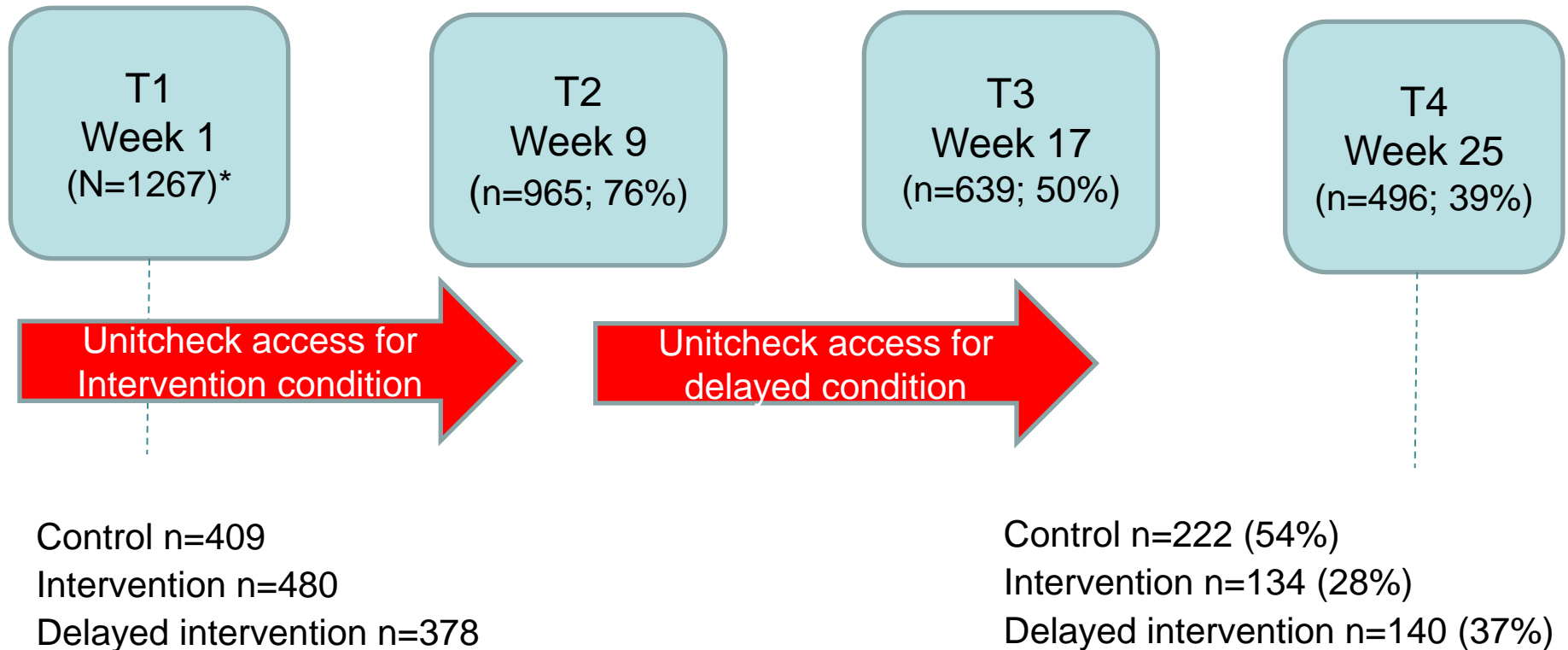
We know that not all students drink alcohol. Students who don't drink form an important part of the student body. This site also provides information to students who don't drink so even if you don't consume alcohol please log on.

#### How safe is my information?

All information you provide is stored safely and securely. The questions do not take long to complete. The

Local intranet

## Recruitment and retention



\*Of 2283 students who registered interest n=1267 (55%) agreed to participate and provided informed consent

## Why did students drop out?

- ▶ An online survey was sent to those participants who had only completed T1 assessment or none at all
  - ▶ Returned by 13% (n=142)
  - ▶ Most common reasons for not completing assessments:
    - ▶ Too busy (75%)
    - ▶ Assessment length (51%)
    - ▶ Forgetting (45%)
    - ▶ Number of assessments (44%)
    - ▶ Loss of interest (41%)
    - ▶ Incentive amount (39%)





- ▶ Neither confidentiality (5%) or computer access (8%) were seen as problems
- ▶ Alcohol consumption data at registration showed those who dropped-out:
  - ▶ Drank significantly more per week ( $21 \pm 23$  vs  $16 \pm 20$  units)
  - ▶ Were more likely to drink at levels above recommended weekly guidelines (46% vs 34%)

## unitcheck

What does Unitcheck do?

See how many units are in the alcohol you drink.

Check if the amount you're drinking is risky for your health.

See how many people drink a similar amount to you.

[register](#)



- Log In
- About
- FAQ
- Contact

### What if I don't drink?

We know that not all people drink alcohol. This site also provides information to those who don't drink so even if you don't consume alcohol please log on.

### How safe is my information?

All information you provide is stored safely and securely. The questions do not take long to complete. The questionnaire is anonymous and confidentiality is assured.





## The future

- ▶ How do we measure perceived norms?
- ▶ How do we contextualise 'norms'?
- ▶ How does 'local culture' impact on intervention effectiveness?
- ▶ Which elements of interventions are effective?
- ▶ What is the life-span of delivering web-based interventions?
- ▶ What facilitates/enables engagement with web-based interventions?
- ▶ How can we increase retention amongst participants recruited remotely?

Thanks for listening



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## References

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- Bewick, B.M, Mulhern, B., Barkham, M., Trusler, K., Hill, A.J. and Stiles, W.B. (2008). Changes in undergraduate student alcohol consumption as they progress through university. *BMC Public Health*, 8, 163, Doi:10.1186/1471-2458-8-163.
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