The majority of the mandated students were men, while volunteer students were mainly women. This makes it more difficult to be sure that the advice by cutting back. There is also the possibility of the assessments and analysis of the results, this raises the possibility that students advised by her might have exaggerated the degree to which they had responded to feedback on how their drinking compares to the average student. It found that these anxious students, overly concerned about how they seemed to others, were less responsive to this information, reducing their assessment of how much the typical student drinks relatively little.

One of these reports also mentions that the lead researcher conducted the intervention. If as seems likely she was also involved in conducting follow-up sessions quite reach statistical significance. Among the voluntary students, one of the four measures (quantity drank per week) did fall significantly more if they had been advised.

Across all the students, being assigned to advice led to significantly greater reductions in drinks per week than receiving neither form of intervention. However, even without advice mandated students did experience greater remission in alcohol-related problems than corresponding volunteer students.

Main findings
Overall being assigned to the intervention led to greater reductions in drinking, and these extra reductions were seen both among mandated and voluntary students. Just being disciplined had a modest and statistically insignificant impact except on drink-related problems.

On none of the four measures of drinking did mandated students cut back significantly more than the corresponding set of non-mandated students, though the combination of being mandated and being advised did lead to a significantly greater reduction in drinks per week than receiving neither form of intervention. However, even without advice mandated students did experience greater remission in alcohol-related problems than corresponding volunteer students.

Across all the students, being assigned to advice led to significantly greater reductions in drinks per week (and nearly significant in peak drinks per drinking day) than not being assigned, though typical daily consumption and frequency of drinking were not affected. Reductions too were greater among the mandated students in particular, but on none of the measures did the extra difference made by the advice sessions quite reach statistical significance. Among the voluntary students, one of the four measures (quantity drank per week) did fall significantly more if they had been advised.

The authors’ conclusions
Findings suggest that mandated students decrease risky drinking behaviour as a result of the disciplinary process, though the addition of brief advice produced larger decreases in weekly alcohol consumption than disciplinary action alone, consistent with previous research on brief advice among mandated students. The findings validate brief intervention programmes on college campuses for students who violate campus alcohol policies.

Also it appears that heavy drinking college students mandated to advice and those who volunteer for it may benefit similarly from a brief intervention designed to reduce risky drinking and associated problems, though.

These results should be considered preliminary and interpreted with caution because of the small sample and the short follow-up period.