

OFFCUTS

A compilation of drinking outcomes among untreated controls groups in randomised alcohol treatment trials shows that at follow up on average about a fifth have become abstinent and that consumption has fallen by a statistically significant 14%.¹ A straight read-over to everyday settings is not possible and the figures conflate at-risk drinkers with alcoholics. However, the study does provide a rough reference point regarding **the level of success that can be expected without active treatment**. The implication is that post-treatment abstinence in a minority of clients and small but significant drinking reductions are not enough to prove that providing a service is better than doing nothing.

¹ Moyer A. *et al.* "Outcomes for untreated individuals involved in randomized trials of alcohol treatment." *Journal of Substance Abuse Treatment*: 2002, 23, p. 247–252. Copies: apply Alcohol Concern.