Treatment rates for alcohol use disorders: a systematic review and meta-analysis

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Background and objectives
Harmful use of alcohol resulted in 3 million deaths worldwide. However, many people with alcohol use disorders (AUDs) left untreated and the 2001 World Health Report made recommendations to halt this treatment gap.

Critical to effective international policy is contemporary data that takes into account advances in health systems and treatment approaches.

The purpose of this systematic review was therefore to investigate whether a change in AUDs treatment rates has occurred since the 2001 World Health Report.

We have also examined if the rates are varied based on the economic status of the Countries.

Findings
Among people with AUDs, there were only small proportion who get treatment.

![Figure 2: overall treatment rates of AUDs](image)

The subgroup analysis by World Bank economic classification of countries indicated that the treatment rate was very low in lower-income and lower-middle-income countries (Table 1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country Level</th>
<th>Dependence Treated (%)</th>
<th>Abuse Treated (%)</th>
<th>AUD Treated (%)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High-income</td>
<td>20.8%</td>
<td>15.7%</td>
<td>20.4%</td>
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<tr>
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<td>11.2%</td>
<td>13.6%</td>
<td>20.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low-income</td>
<td>0%</td>
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<td>9.3%</td>
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![Table 1: Treatment rates of AUDs by Countries economic level](image)

Implications
Studies examining the treatment rate for AUDs are limited and vary rare in low income countries.

The treatment rate for AUDs did not improved despite the 2001 World Health Report and the hereafter activities.

Given the low treatment rate, even in high income Countries, availability of AUDs services alone cannot increase the treatment seeking.

Conclusion
Studies in treatment rate of AUDs are limited and substantial inter-studies heterogeneity was identified.

Meta-analysis of these moderate quality studies showed that the treatment rate for AUDs is low in the global setting, with the lowest treatment rates observed in low-income and lower-middle-income countries.

Given the limitation of generalizability in this review, further high-quality treatment rate estimation studies are required, particularly in low income countries.

Key References

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Figure 1: PRISMA flow chart

Figure 2: overall treatment rates of AUDs

Table 1: Treatment rates of AUDs by Countries economic level

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