

Brief interventions for heavy alcohol users
admitted to general hospital:
preliminary results of a systematic review

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Objectives

- To determine whether brief interventions reduce alcohol consumption and improve outcomes for heavy alcohol users admitted to general hospital

Outcomes of interest Do brief interventions

- Impact on alcohol consumption levels?
- Improve quality of life and ability to function in society?
- Lead to a reduction in hospital re-admission rates, alcohol related injuries?

Methods

- Protocol
- Literature search
- Study selection
- Assessment of study quality
- Data Extraction
- Data Analysis
- Presenting results

Inclusion Criteria

- Trials with adults 18 years or over
- Hospital inpatient units not identified as psychiatric or addiction services
- Brief intervention a single session up to four sessions involving an individual patient or health care practitioner
- Should be compared to a control condition or extended psychological sessions

Primary Outcomes of interest

- Alcohol consumption levels, self report data measured by number of drinks per day, drinking diary
- Alcohol consumption tests FAST, AUDIT, CAGE
- Laboratory markers eg GGT blood or saliva

Secondary outcome measures

- Hospital re-admission rates
- Mortality
- Alcohol related injuries
- Quality of life
- Sickness absence from work
- Adverse legal events i.e violence driving offences
- Need for institutional care

Included studies

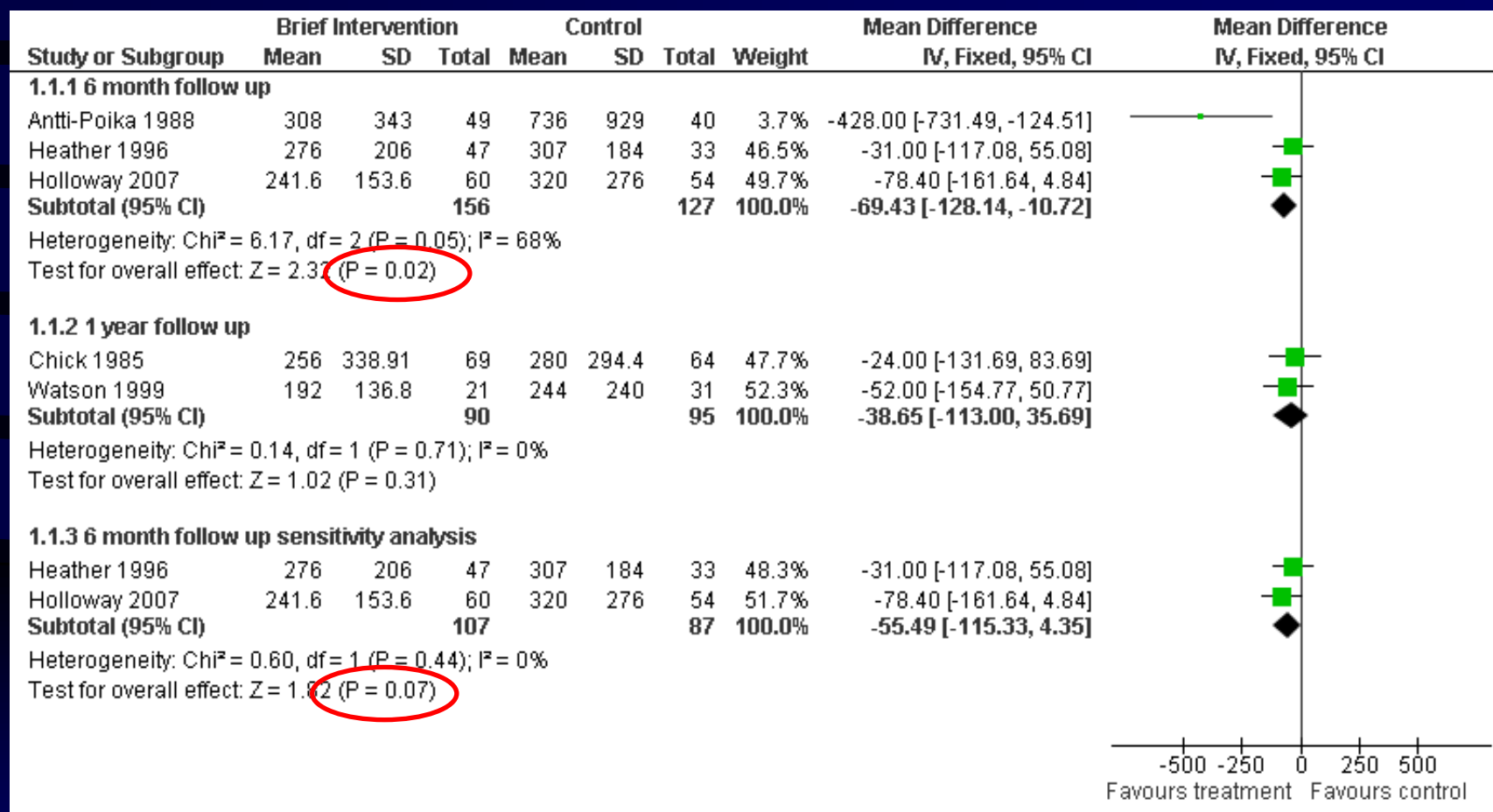
- 11 studies 2751 participants
- 5 from the UK (Chick 1985, Holloway 2007, McManus 2003, McQueen 2006, Watson 1999)
- 4 from the US (Gentilelo 1999, Saitz 2007, Schermer 2006, Soderstrom 2007)
- 1 from Australia (Heather 1996)
- 1 from Finland (Antti-Poika 1988)

Brief Interventions

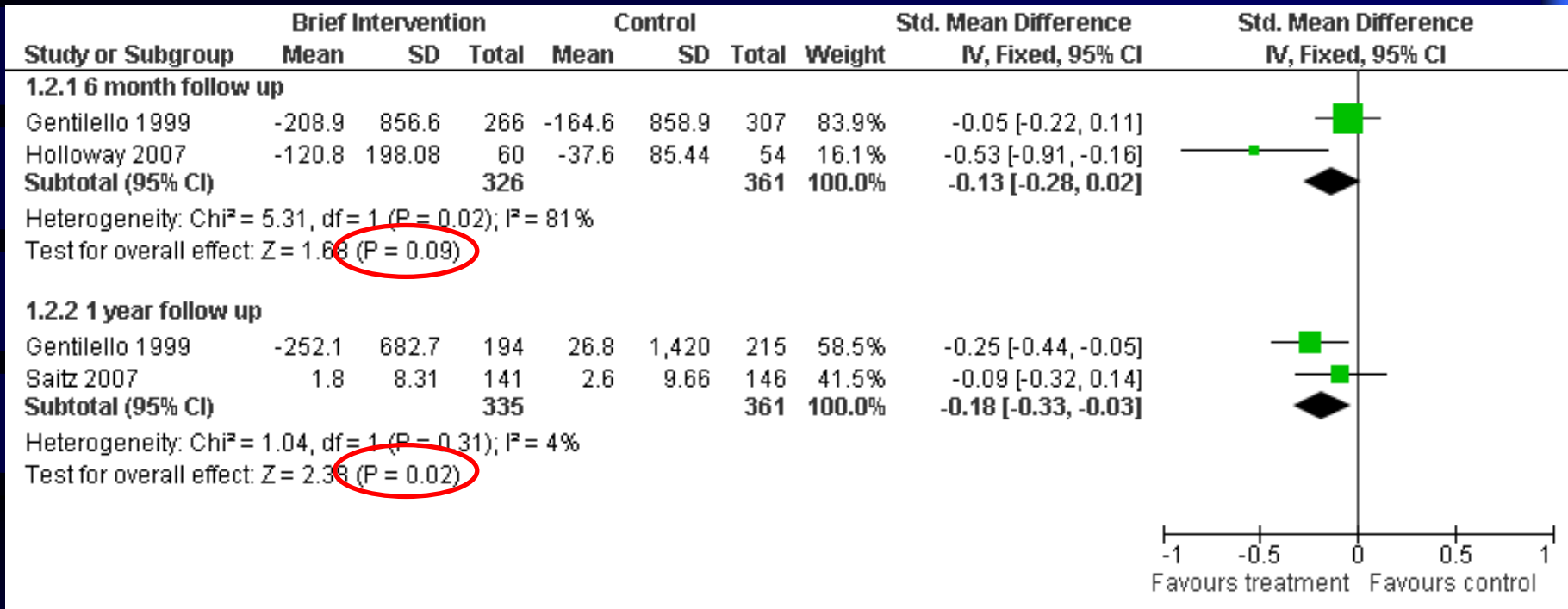
- 8 studies delivered one session 20-60mins
- 2 studies evaluated more than one intervention
- 1 study compared two different brief interventions

- Brief interventions were delivered by a range of health professionals

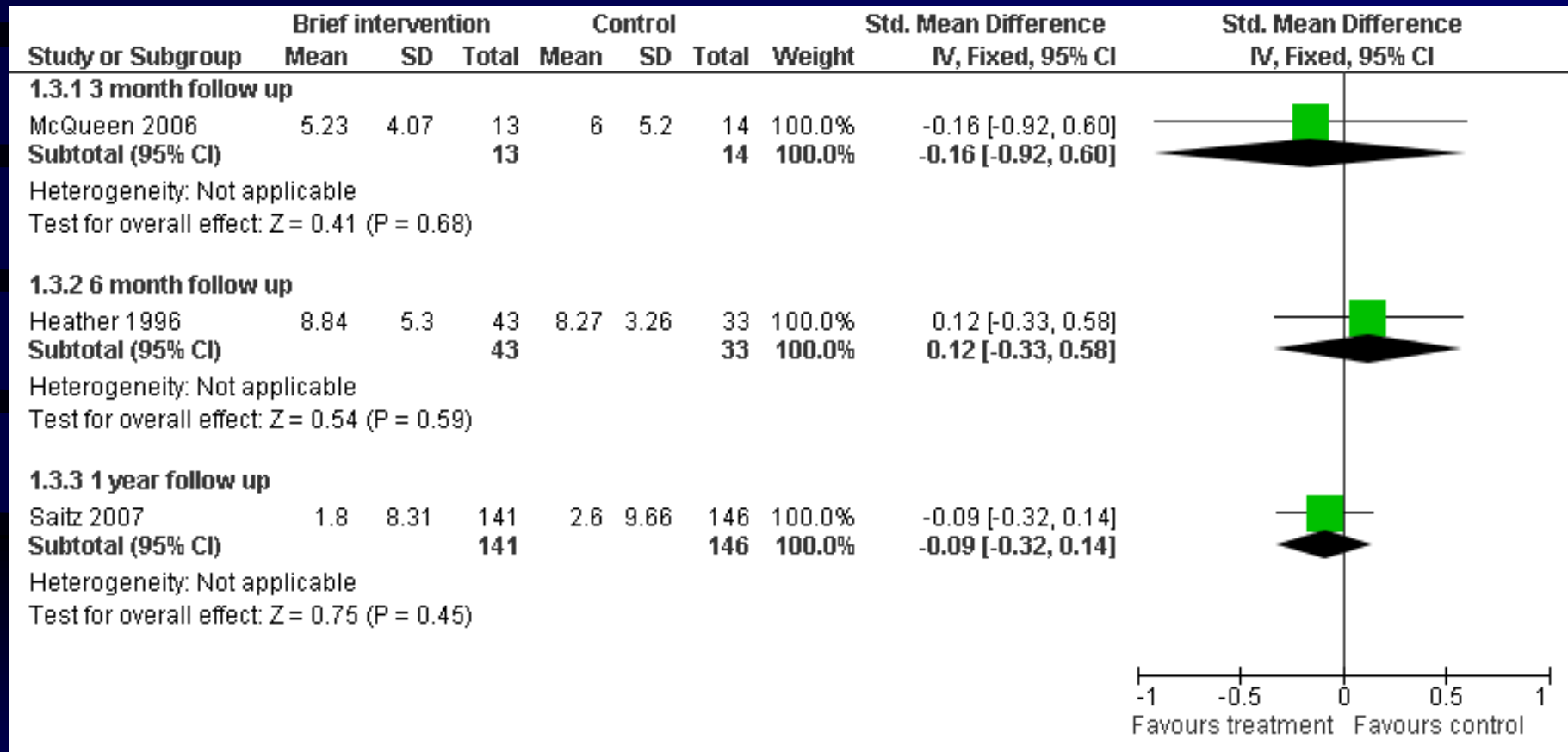
Forest plot of comparison: 1 Brief interventions versus control,
outcome: 1.1 Mean alcohol consumption in grams per week.



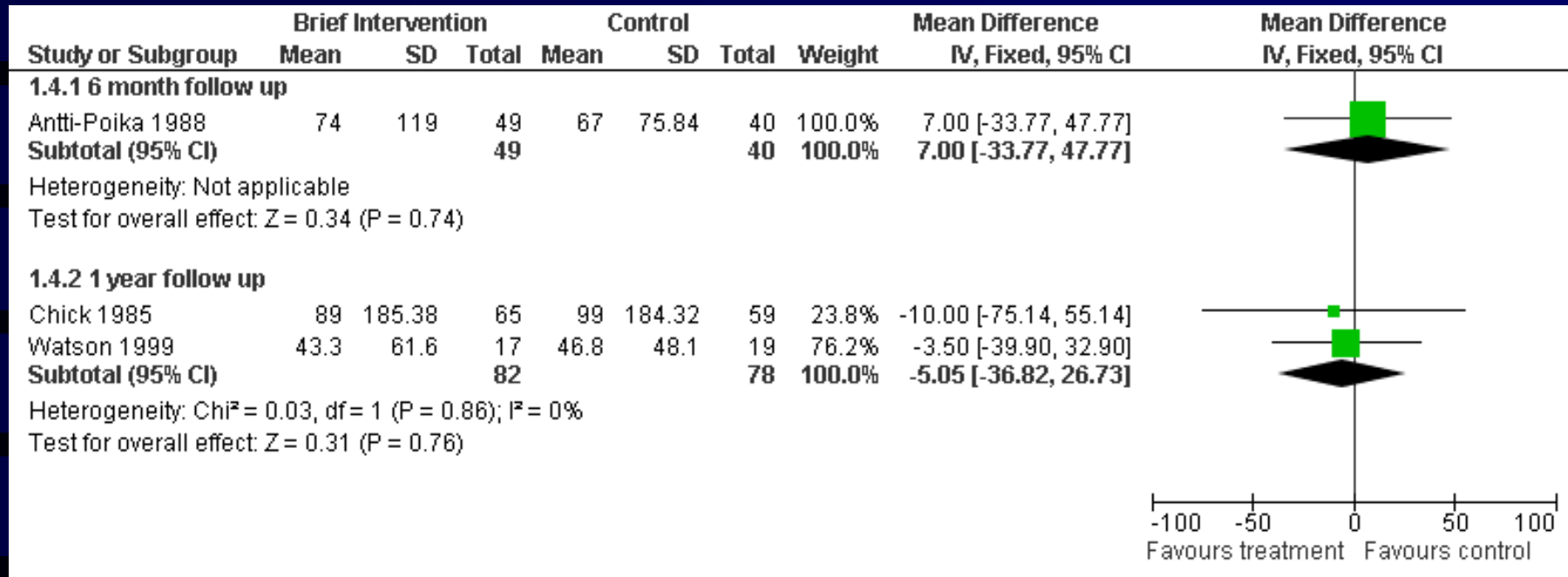
Forest plot of comparison: 1 Brief interventions versus control,
outcome: 1.2 Mean alcohol consumption per week (change scores from baseline).



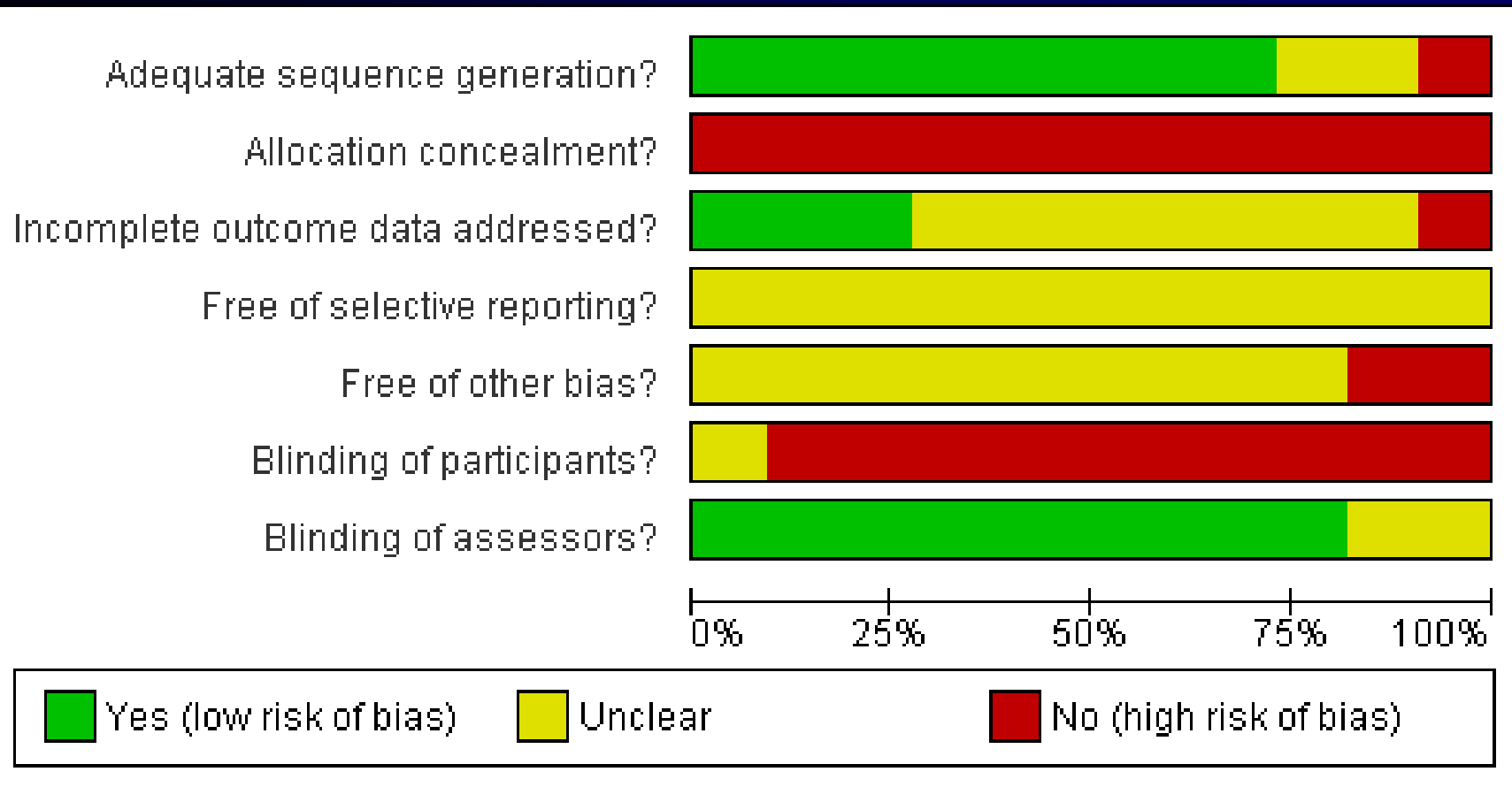
Forest plot of comparison: 1 Brief interventions versus control,
 outcome: 1.3 Self reports of alcohol consumption.



Forest plot of comparison: 1 Brief interventions versus control, outcome: 1.4 Laboratory markers (GammaGT).



Methodological quality graph: review authors' judgements about each methodological quality item presented as percentages across all included studies.



Preliminary results suggest

- Brief interventions appear to have an impact in reducing alcohol consumption at one year follow up but not at six months Why?
- Screening alone may also have some impact on alcohol consumption levels but changes in drinking behavior do not appear to be sustained for as long
- Two studies are still undergoing assessment

Secondary Outcome measures

- Hospital Re-admission rates
- Mortality
- Alcohol related injuries
- Quality of life
- Sickness absence from work
- Adverse legal events i.e. violence driving offences
- Need for institutional care

The results based on the included studies were not statistically significant as they were either not reported or not reported consistently

Overall

- The strength of evidence contained within the studies is limited
- Future studies should be done using outcome measures consistent with the studies in this review
- A need for more studies in this area to provide evidence to support the implementation of brief interventions as standard practice

Future Directions

- Plan to submit this review for publication in the Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews.

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