A Randomized Controlled Trial of Social Media Interventions for Risky Drinking Among Adolescents and Emerging Adults

Testing the efficacy of group-based social media interventions targeting risky drinking among youth

- **955 youth** (ages 16–24) reporting recent risky drinking
- Randomized to **8-week secret Facebook group** conditions:
  1. Social Media Intervention + Incentive for Engagement ($1/day or $56 total)
  2. Social Media Intervention Only
  3. Attention-placebo Control
- **E-coaches trained in motivational interviewing** facilitated interaction in intervention groups

**Primary Outcomes**
- Past 3-month alcohol use and consequences over 3-, 6-, and 12-month follow-ups

**Secondary Outcomes**
- Other drug use, consequences, and impaired driving
- Intervention engagement and acceptability

**Key Findings:**
- Greater acceptability ratings and engagement in the Social Media Intervention + Incentives condition relative to other groups, and in the Social Media Intervention Only condition relative to the control group
- No significant differences between interventions and control on alcohol-related outcomes, with all groups showing reductions
- Compared to control, the incentivized group reduced other drug use, consequences, and cannabis-impaired driving; the non-incentivized group did not significantly differ from the control condition

**Conclusion:** There were significant effects of the incentivized social media intervention on drug (but not alcohol) outcomes. Future studies are needed to further refine social media-delivered interventions to reduce alcohol and other drug use.