Do particular AA activities explain the effect of a 12-step facilitation program (MAAEZ) on alcohol and drug abstinence?

Meenakshi S. Subbaraman  
*University of California - Berkeley*

Lee Ann Kaskutas  
*University of California - Berkeley*

Sarah E. Zemore  
*University of California - Berkeley*
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Meenakshi S. Subbaraman, M.S., Lee Ann Kaskutas, Dr.P.H., Sarah E. Zemore, Ph.D.
Alcohol Research Group, Emeryville, CA; University of California Berkeley, School of Public Health

**BACKGROUND**

**What is MAAEZ (Making Alcoholics Anonymous Easier)?**
- Manualized, group-format intervention
- Designed for treatment centers
- Aimed at engaging participants in 12-step fellowship
- Prepares participants for 12-step culture

**Is MAAEZ effective?**
- A recent trial showed that MAAEZ participants had increased odds of abstinence compared to the control group (OR = 1.58, p = 0.063, Kaskutas et al. [2009])
- MAAEZ also appeared especially effective for participants with high prior AA attendance, as well as those with high psychological severity

**DESCRIPTION of MAAEZ TRIAL PARTICIPANTS: (N=508)**
- Sample overall:
  - Anyone already in treatment was eligible for the MAAEZ trial
  - 67% male, mean age 36, 20% African American, 52% White
  - 312 in MAAEZ, 196 in usual care
- High prior AA attendance (> 90 lifetime meetings):
  - 69% male, mean age 39, 16% African American, 66% White
  - 119 in MAAEZ, 84 in usual care
- High psychological severity (> median ASI psych):
  - 65% male, mean age 36, 20% African American, 55% White
  - 140 in MAAEZ, 115 in usual care

**MEASURES**
- All variables measured at baseline, 7 weeks, 6 months, and 12 months after baseline
- Questions asked about social network composition, AA attitudes and involvement, psychological problems, psychological severity, and drinking and drug use

**PROCEDURES**
- Usual care compared to MAAEZ intervention in health services trial
- Face to face and telephone interviews
- Urinalysis performed for abstinence verification

**METHODS**

**THE BARON & KENNY PATHS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mediator</th>
<th>Abstinence, 12 months</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MAAEZ condition</td>
<td>c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAAEZ condition</td>
<td>a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAAEZ condition</td>
<td>b</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**METHODS: SOBEL’S TEST**

\[
S^2 = \frac{ab}{\sqrt{b^2 \cdot se_a^2 + a^2 \cdot se_b^2}}
\]

**RESULTS: Significant paths a and b, mediating measured at 6 months**

- Have sponsor
- Done service
- Comfort speaking
- Comfort at mtg
- Abstinence, 12 months

**RESULTS: Moderated mediation**

- High psych sev
- Done service, 6&12 months
- Clean and sober, 6&12 months

**METHODS: B&K and Sobel’s**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mediator</th>
<th>Overall</th>
<th>High Prior AA</th>
<th>High Psych Sev</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sponsor</td>
<td>B (S)</td>
<td>B (S)</td>
<td>B (S)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service</td>
<td>(S)</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>B</td>
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<tr>
<td>Support</td>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>B</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conf speak</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>(S)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conf @ mtg</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>(S)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sponsor, 6&amp;12</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>B</td>
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</tr>
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<td>(S)</td>
<td>B</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

- B = meets Baron and Kenny criteria
- S = Sobel’s statistic, p<0.05
- (S) = Sobel’s statistic, p<0.1

**CONCLUSIONS**

- AA activities, especially doing service, mediate the effects of MAAEZ in both the sample overall and within subgroups
- Having support for sobriety is especially important for those with high prior AA and those with high psychological severity
- Neither increased meeting attendance nor composite AA activity measures appeared to mediate MAAEZ effects
- Results suggest that MAAEZ works by connecting people with other AA members

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