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

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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
- 65% male, mean age 36, 20% African American, 55% White
- 140 in MAAEZ, 115 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

Methods: The Baron & Kenny Paths

METHODS: SOBEL’S TEST

\[ z = \frac{ab}{\sqrt{b^2 \cdot s_{ab}^2 + a^2 \cdot s_{bc}^2}} \]

Results: Significant paths a and b, mediators measured at 6 months

RESULTS: Significant paths a and b, mediators measured at 12 months

RESULTS: Moderated mediation

RESULTS: Multiple mediation, mediators measured at 6 months

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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