

What works in substance abuse prevention? An update based on 62 international reviews of effectiveness

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Abstrakt

AIM: To assess the effectiveness of existing interventions to prevent substance abuse by means of high quality review articles. For the purpose of this expert report, effectiveness was defined as the prevention, delay or reduction of the consumption of tobacco, alcohol, cannabis and other illicit psychoactive substances through universal or selective approaches. Both behavioural and environmental prevention interventions are assessed. An attempt is made to derive conclusions as to the effectiveness of established measures in various settings. This expert report which will be available as EMCDDA insights publication soon is aimed at people responsible for substance abuse prevention (decision-makers) on all political levels as well as those in charge of developing and/or implementing preventive measures. **METHOD:** The study was registered at PROSPERO and thus is in line with the PRISMA statement. The literature search was conducted in the period between October and November 2012 in international databases (The Cochrane Library, Database of Abstracts of Reviews of Effects (DARE), PubMed, PsycINFO, Psyn dex, Web of Science) and was restricted to studies published between 2004 and 2012. From over 5.000 hits of the literature search and other relevant publications, 62 studies were selected, including 17 meta-analyses and 38 systematic reviews. All conclusions are allocated strength of evidence ratings. **RESULTS:** In total, 91 conclusions were drawn regarding universal and selective prevention of substance abuse. A selection will be presented in the paper. **DISCUSSION:** The scientific evidence reviewed illustrates that effective and feasible interventions and policies are available for substance abuse prevention. Although there still are research gaps to be closed, we know what to do best and how to do it. The call is for action!