

The role of a new Cochrane systematic review examining community-wide interventions to increase physical activity

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Objective

We sought to compare a new Cochrane review of community-wide strategies to increase physical activity to an earlier, but prominent CDC Community-Guide Review of Community wide campaigns to increase physical activity.

Methods

We compared definitions, design and findings of the newer Cochrane Review (2011) with the earlier CDC Community Guide Review (2001)

Results

Issue	Community Guide 2002	Cochrane 2011
Definition of intervention	Presented as multi-components evaluated together	Within defined scope, requiring at least 2 of 6 broad strategies
Definition of community	Broad, no clear definition included whole of country interventions	Geographically defined community, such as a village, town, or city.
Follow-up	No minimum	Minimum 6 months
Use of logic model	Broad model for class of interventions	2 level logic model defining the intervention
Types of study designs included	Uncontrolled	Comparison / control
Search strategy	8 databases, English 1980-2000, strategy unavailable	24 databases, no language restrictions 1995-2011, strategy available
Included studies	10, high income countries, 1980-1998	25, 7 low income countries, 1993-2009
Assessment	Quality score: execution, measurement, results interpretation	Risk of bias assessment
Overlapping studies	4 overlapping studies, 6 C-G papers excluded from Cochrane for multiple reasons such as study design. 4 papers within scope by date were not included in C-G review.	
Conclusions	Strongly recommended	Did not find evidence of effectiveness

Conclusions

Differences in the findings between older and newer reviews of similar topics can be due to a variety of factors including: 1) an updated definition of the intervention, 2) improvements in the standards and methodologies for systematic reviews and 3) the inclusion of newer studies. These factors need to be understood whenever differences between newer and older public health reviews are considered.

References

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