

The effectiveness of psychosocial interventions for family members impacted by another's substance use: A systematic review of the last 10 years

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Introduction and Aims: Substance use disorders (SUD) negatively affect both the person using, and their families. Research on interventions to support families remains limited. This review examines the effectiveness of psychosocial interventions for affected family members.

Design and Methods: A systematic review was conducted of randomised, non-randomised, and pre-post studies published between 2010-2020 examining the effectiveness of group or individual interventions for families. Five databases were searched (PubMed, PsycINFO, Medline, Web of Science, Cochrane Library). Outcomes included psychological functioning, quality of life, physical health, substance use, and general functioning (family functioning, coping). Study quality assessed using the Effective Public Health Practice Project's Quality Assessment Tool.

Results: Nineteen studies were included. Ten were deemed weak methodological quality. Ten were appropriate for meta-analysis. Meta-analysis of three studies found that individually administered interventions significantly reduced depression (standardised mean difference [SMD] = .50, 95%CI = .21, .79) and distress (SMD = .28, 95%CI = .03, .54). Pooled effects from two single-arm studies indicated improved family functioning ($d = .51$, 95%CI = .28, .73) and coping ($d = .43$, 95%CI = .24, .61). Pooled effects of five studies found that group interventions significantly reduced depression ($d = .50$, 95%CI = .17, .82) and distress ($d = .44$, 95%CI = .13, .75), and improved coping ($d = .81$, 95%CI = .29, 1.33).

Discussions and Conclusions: Individual and group interventions demonstrated favourable outcomes for families. The strongest evidence indicated reductions in depression and distress with individual interventions. However, small samples, measurement inconsistency, and low-quality studies limit conclusions.

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