

## Defining approaches and research evidence around Community Action to reduce AOD harms

Peter Gates<sup>1</sup>, Sara Farnbach<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre, UNSW Sydney, Sydney, Australia*

Presenter's email: [peter.gates@unsw.edu.au](mailto:peter.gates@unsw.edu.au)

**Introduction:** National and Global Drug Strategy documents have prioritised community action among suggested efforts to reduce the harms from alcohol and other drugs (AOD). This community focus stems from the recognition that AOD use occurs in community settings, and the potential efficiency of changing collective rather than individual behaviours. However, community action is not well defined in Strategy documents and there is a lack of guidance around what should be involved. To address this gap, we aim to define community action as a response to AOD harms and what types of activities are typically involved; and explore what research evidence there is regarding community action and how it is obtained.

**Methods:** A systematic umbrella review was conducted. Our literature search strategy included electronic databases (CENTRAL, Embase, Medline, and PsycINFO), review registries (Cochrane, DoPHER, DARE), and additional hand searching. Reviews were assessed to explore community action targeting AOD use and related harms. Evaluation studies identified by reviews were retrieved and data on their components, implementation, and results relating to AOD outcomes were extracted. We have also partnered with lead NSW-based AOD organisations with community action portfolios to learn more about their processes.

**Key Findings:** We define community action to include the formation of community coalitions to promote community mobilisation which includes community-based activities, events, and other programs. Community mobilisation efforts are typically evaluated as part of wider response strategies and with indirect (intentions to use) or proxy outcomes (participation rates, hospital admissions). Evidence for impact is mixed, weighted to youth, and there is scant information on activity details, or barriers and enablers.

**Discussions and Conclusions:** Our umbrella review provided little guidance for which community-based activities or events are most effective, nor how they should be planned, implemented, and evaluated. We plan to conduct further work with community AOD action groups and organisations to address this gap.

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