

Research briefing

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INTERVENTIONS TO REDUCE THE PUBLIC HEALTH BURDEN OF GAMBLING RELATED HARMS:

A mapping review of the international evidence.

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About the research

- The objective of this systematic review was to look for and summarise UK and international research on interventions to reduce the public health burden of gambling related harm
- We conducted a mapping review of review level evidence to identify, appraise and synthesise existing research evidence in relation to interventions which aim to reduce gambling related harm; including what is known, and where there are clear gaps in the evidence base.
- Inclusion criteria: whole population or identified gamblers (including self-defined); also reviews of specific populations at risk e.g. children and young people; any intervention to prevent or address gambling related harm; any or no comparison; outcome of prevention or treatment of gambling related harm.

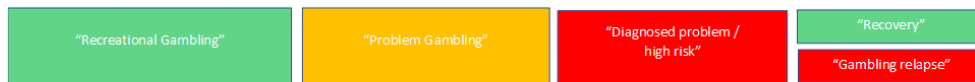
Implications

- Gambling related harm is a relatively new concept in gambling research with most of the literature focusing on the concept of “problem gamblers”. This implies a focus on changing the behaviour of individuals, rather than addressing the underlying causes.
- Although there have been a number of recent reviews, evidence from the primary literature remains limited, and review authors struggled to make conclusive statements about the evidence they examined in terms of clear support for any specific types of intervention, or for relative superiority of particular interventions or approaches over others.
- Lack of evidence must not be a justification for inaction in addressing the growing burden of gambling related harm. Action still needs to be based on the best available evidence and implementation must be accompanied by a comprehensive evaluation of both the intended and unintended consequences. This will in time allow the current deficiencies in the evidence-base to be systematically addressed.

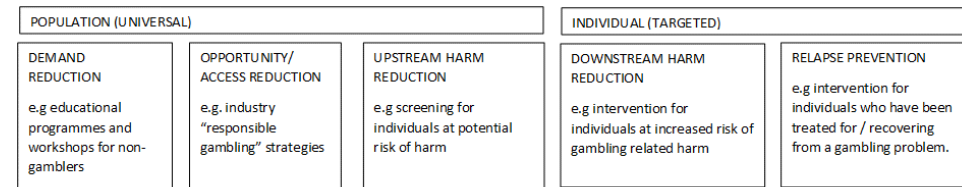


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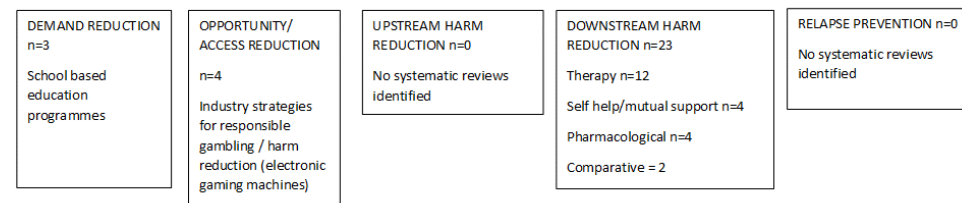
GAMBLING TIMELINE:



KNOWN INTERVENTIONS:



SYSTEMATIC REVIEW LEVEL EVIDENCE (n= 30 reviews)



Key findings

- We found 30 relevant studies and developed a typology of interventions considering the study population, and the type of interventions.
- The reviews were divided into those reporting on universal preventative interventions for the whole population, and those evaluating selective interventions for those at high risk of harm:
- Whole population preventative interventions:
 - Demand reduction: interventions to reduce the demand for gambling (n=3).
 - Interventions limiting gambling activity: to limit opportunities to gamble (n=4).
- Targeted interventions for individuals at increased risk of harm:
 - Therapeutic interventions (n=12)
 - Studies comparing approaches (n=2)
 - Self-help/mutual support interventions (n=4)
 - Pharmacological interventions (n=5)
- Two further potential types of intervention we had expected to find were not represented in the systematic review-level evidence: interventions to screen, identify and support individuals at risk of gambling related harm (whole population), and interventions to support ongoing recovery and prevent relapse into gambling related harm for gamblers at risk of harm.

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