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Alcohol Brief Interventions and Interventions to Protect Well-Being for Armed Forces Personnel Moving Back into Civilian Life


Two Systematic Reviews of Evidence

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This study was a collaboration between Newcastle University and Teesside University in the UK.

The study was in two parts; firstly examining research evidence for the effectiveness of alcohol brief interventions for Armed Forces personnel moving back into civilian life and secondly examining research evidence for the effectiveness of brief interventions to protect well-being.



The study was funded by the UK charity Forces in Mind Trust.

Part One: Alcohol Brief Interventions A Systematic Review

METHOD

Electronic databases including Medline, Central, Health Care Management Information Consortium (HMIC), and Embase were searched. 3415 articles were assessed and only ten articles met criteria for inclusion in the review. An assessment of the quality of the evidence was made using an established instrument (the Quality Assessment Tool for Quantitative Studies: EPHPP 1998; Thomas et al 2004).

RESULTS

There was much variation across studies in design, type of intervention evaluated (e.g. information leaflet about alcohol or face-to-face advice) and the participants recruited. All studies were conducted in the USA. Brief interventions are quick, preventative, and evidence suggests can be implemented upstream of acute clinical services to reduce the risk of developing long term alcohol related difficulties (Kaner et al 2007). The findings from the review suggest interventions delivered over the internet may have some utility with Armed Forces and support more research investigation in the UK.



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The findings from the review are published here:

Wigham S, Bauer A, Robalino S, Ferguson J, Burke A, Newbury-Birch D. A systematic review of the effectiveness of alcohol brief interventions for the UK military personnel moving back to civilian life. *Journal of the Royal Army Medical Corps*. 2017 Mar 20:jramc-2016.

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Part Two: Well-Being Interventions A Systematic Review

The second part of the study looked at the effectiveness of interventions to protect the well-being of Armed Forces personnel at the time of moving back into civilian life.

METHOD

Electronic databases were searched including MEDLINE, PsycINFO, EMBASE, Cochrane Central Register of Controlled Trials (CENTRAL), Health Management Information Consortium (HMIC), Web of Science, CINAHL, PubMed, PILOTS, PAIS International, Project Cork, Ministry of Defence (gov.uk) and the US Defence Technical Information Centre (dtic.mil).

RESULTS

9132 articles were assessed and 12 selected for inclusion in the review. All studies were from the USA and interventions included expressive writing, ways to manage negative emotion and thoughts, techniques to promote relaxation, connection in relationships and resilience. Interventions had some beneficial effects for veterans and other family members e.g. reducing distress and symptoms of low mood.



Improvements on indicators of well being were seen mostly in veterans who were experiencing some difficulties or seeking support.

The findings from the review will be of interest to service developers, commissioners and researchers and can be accessed here:

Bauer A, Newbury-Birch D, Robalino S, Ferguson J, Wigham S. Is prevention better than cure? A systematic review of the effectiveness of well-being interventions for military personnel adjusting to civilian life. PloS one. 2018 May 2;13(5):e0190144.

<https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0190144>



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World Health Organization. Mental health: a state of well-being 2014; http://www.who.int/features/factfiles/mental_health/en/ (accessed 26 October 2017).

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Research Team

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