

Violence brief interventions:

A rapid review of evaluations and recommendations

Background

Interpersonal violence involving young men is major public health problem in Scotland. Treatment for violent injury may represent a teachable moment to provide a Violence Brief Intervention (VBI). To inform VBI development, a review was undertaken to examine existing models of brief intervention, and to assess evidence of their impact.

Methods

Three research databases (Web of Knowledge, PubMed and PsycInfo) were searched for papers published in English before 11/03/13 using the following criteria: violence (Violen* OR Agress* OR Assault* OR Homicide OR Murder OR GBH OR Grievous Bodily Harm OR ABH OR Actual Bodily Harm), intervention (Interven* OR Program* OR Initiative), intervention length (Brief OR Rapid OR Short), and gender of participants (Male* OR man OR boy* OR men). After removal of duplicates 553 papers were yielded. Titles and abstracts were independently appraised using pre-specified inclusion/exclusion criteria by three authors resulting in 50 full texts. Papers were most commonly excluded for describing interventions which were group-based or part of a long-term programme. Full texts were reviewed by the first author, identifying eight distinct VBIs.

Findings

The key findings of the review included: the use of brief motivational interviewing for engaging with at-risk participants; the utility of social norms approaches for correcting peer norm misperceptions; the benefit of working with victims of violence in medical settings (particularly oral and maxillofacial surgeries); the importance of addressing alcohol in violent encounters; the advantages of computer-therapist hybrid models of delivery; and the need for adequate follow-up evaluation as part of a randomised control trial.

Interpretation

The review was a valuable exercise in assessing the existence of VBIs, and summarising their key characteristics. It was, however, constrained by the potentially overly-restrictive search criteria which limited the number of included interventions, and the limited follow-up data for some

interventions thereby preventing assessment of effectiveness. Nonetheless, brief interventions represent a potentially useful tool in the prevention of interpersonal violence involving young men. The findings of the review will inform the development of a VBI with young men in Scotland who have sustained injuries through interpersonal violence.

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Author Contributions

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Conflicts of Interest

None.