

Evidence Review: Social Marketing for the Prevention and Control of Communicable Diseases

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Project background

- European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) commissioned project:
 - 'Establishing a programme for dissemination of evidence based health communication activities and innovations on communicable diseases for country support in the EU and EEA/EFTA 2009-12.'



Rapid evidence review

- One of three rapid evidence reviews produced for the project.
- Aim: To map and review the evidence for the effectiveness of social marketing for the prevention and control of communicable disease, with particular reference to the European context.
- Review of systematic reviews.

Methods

- Comprehensive search strategy to identify international systematic reviews:
 - Published 2000-2011
 - Social marketing the substantive focus
 - At least $\frac{1}{4}$ of included studies relate to the prevention or control of communicable disease
- Individual European studies identified from included systematic reviews.
- Key learning drawn from systematic reviews and individual European studies.

Results

- 5 international systematic reviews across a variety of public health topics.
- 3 individual European studies:
 - 2 evaluations of hand hygiene interventions [Switzerland, United Kingdom]
 - 1 evaluation of a sexual health intervention [United Kingdom]

The evidence

- Social marketing interventions can have positive impacts on the control and prevention of communicable disease:
 - Hand hygiene
 - Sexual health
- Limited but promising evidence from Europe.
- Lack of conceptual clarity.
- Promotion is the best recognised component of the marketing mix: limited recognition of other components.

The evidence

- Removing or minimising barriers to behaviour change contributes to the success of social marketing interventions.
- Some evidence that long term social marketing interventions may be more effective than short term interventions for behavioural outcomes.
- Some evidence that interventions that include upstream partnership building are more likely to result in positive outcomes than those that do not.

Recommendations

- Social marketing can strengthen communication based approaches to control and prevention of communicable disease.
- More emphasis on other components of the marketing mix (price, product, place) to enhance effectiveness.
- More extensive and detailed publication of process and impact evaluations.

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<http://ecdc.europa.eu/en/publications/Publications/Social-marketing-prevention-control-of-communicable-disease.pdf>

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