Outreach programmes for health improvement of Traveller Communities: a synthesis of evidence

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Plain English summary

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Plain English summary

‘Traveller Communities’ include a broad variety of groups of nomadic lifestyle or culture. They experience significant health inequalities and, as a result of experiences of discrimination and eviction, may distrust settled people and services.

This research identified and synthesised the evidence on outreach interventions aiming to improve the health of Traveller Communities through (1) a scoping review of the evidence, (2) an economic review of the evidence on the cost-effectiveness of different types of outreach and (3) a realist review, using theory to explain how and in what circumstances outreach works best. Traveller Community members and outreach workers were involved throughout the review in order to refine the findings.

The 278 studies identified described needs, with less focus on interventions.

Little evidence was available for the economic evaluation. Practice nurses can facilitate access, and may be cost-effective. Traveller Community members can deliver cultural awareness training for moderate costs. Mobile clinics have high costs, but may not provide either value for money or an appealing format for Traveller Communities.

The realist synthesis explained that outreach is likely to result in participation, behaviour change or social capital development. The level of trust that the Community has in the outreach worker influences which topics may be successfully addressed and what level of engagement is most likely to result from the intervention. The more trusted the outreach worker is, the less they need to negotiate the intervention topic and vice versa.

Further research is needed to explore the relevance of these findings to other socially excluded groups.
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This report

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