

Community pharmacy interventions for public health priorities: a systematic review of community pharmacy-delivered smoking, alcohol and weight management interventions

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Plain English summary

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Alcohol misuse, smoking and obesity are public health priorities; poorer and more vulnerable people are more likely to have a problem with alcohol, smoking and being overweight. Most people live near a pharmacy, and pharmacies are often found in poor areas and open long hours. Pharmacies may therefore be a useful place to help those people most in need and people who may not visit other health-care settings, such as doctors' surgeries or primary care centres.

We found 24 studies that compared a pharmacy-based intervention with doing nothing or another type of intervention that could have also been set in a pharmacy or elsewhere. We found that smoking cessation studies set in pharmacies help adults to stop smoking, especially when compared with doing nothing. Not enough studies of interventions for alcohol misuse have been conducted to draw conclusions. Pharmacy-based weight loss interventions helped adults to lose about the same amount of weight as similar interventions led by nurses in doctors' surgeries, but not as much as commercial weight management services. Studies that aimed to help people control their diabetes mellitus, and reduce their cholesterol or blood pressure by better management of their medicines and by making changes to their lifestyle, were effective but did not help these people to lose weight at the same time.

Hardly any of the studies looked at whether or not the different characteristics of people, such as their income, made a difference to how well the interventions worked or how fair these interventions are across the whole population.

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