WORKPLACE INTERVENTIONS FOR SMOKING CESSATION

Taryn Young, MB ChB, FCPHM, MMed
RYTD Consultancy, Pinelands, Cape Town, South Africa

Background
Smoking impacts significantly on health, and interventions to encourage smoking cessation receive a lot of attention. The workplace is a specific environment which can be targeted to implement interventions aimed at promoting smoking cessation. You decide to search and find the latest evidence of the effects of these interventions.

So what is the question?
What are the effects of workplace interventions for smoking cessation?

The type of evidence to look for, and where to look for it

The best evidence will come from well conducted, up-to-date systematic reviews.

The Cochrane Occupational Health Field (COHF) (www.cohf.fi), part of the international Cochrane Collaboration, aims to provide up-to-date evidence on the effects of occupational health (OH) interventions. The field maintains specific databases of occupational interventions and systematic reviews, organises hand searching of OH journals, has developed search strategies for finding OH studies in PubMed, maintains a wish list of desirable systematic reviews, develops methodological support for OH systematic review authors and communicates with those interested in the field.

You search the COHF database of systematic reviews.

What was found?
You found a recent systematic review which assessed the effects of workplace interventions for smoking cessation.1

What did the authors do?
The authors searched the Cochrane Tobacco Addiction Group Specialized Register in April 2008, PubMed (1966 – April 2008), EMBASE (1985 – Feb 2008) and PsycINFO (to March 2008). They also searched abstracts from international conferences on tobacco and the bibliographies of identified studies and reviews for additional references. They included 51 randomised and quasi-randomised controlled trials referring to 53 interventions conducted in the workplace to promote smoking cessation.

Results and conclusion
Thirty-seven studies of workplace interventions aimed at individual workers, covering group therapy, individual counselling, self-help materials, nicotine replacement therapy and social support were included. The results were consistent with those found in other settings. Group programmes, individual counselling and nicotine replacement therapy increased cessation rates in comparison with no treatment or minimal intervention controls. Self-help materials were less effective. Sixteen studies tested interventions applied to the workplace as a whole. There was a lack of evidence that comprehensive programmes reduced the prevalence of smoking. Incentive schemes increased attempts to stop smoking, though there was less evidence that they increased the rate of actual quitting.

REFERENCES

* Some EBHC resources

Clinical Evidence: www.clinicalevidence.org

Clinical Evidence is a 6-monthly, updated compendium of evidence on the effects of common clinical interventions, published by the BMJ Publishing Group. It provides a concise account of the current state of knowledge, ignorance and uncertainty about the prevention and treatment of a wide range of clinical conditions based on thorough searches of the literature. It summarises the best available evidence and focuses on the effects of preventative and therapeutic interventions as demonstrated by randomised trials and systematic reviews of such trials.

Evidence-Based Medicine: ebm.bmj.com

Evidence-Based Medicine is a journal released every other month which alerts clinicians to important advances in general and family practice, internal medicine, surgery, psychiatry, paediatrics and obstetrics and gynaecology. This is accomplished by selecting from the biomedical literature those original and review articles whose results are most likely to be true and useful. The articles are also summarised in abstracts and a commentary by a clinical expert is added. This site contains a large
Evidence-Based Nursing: www.ebn.bmjjournal.com

Evidence-Based Nursing is a journal released four times a year which alerts practising nurses to important and clinically relevant advances in treatment, diagnosis, aetiology, prognosis/outcome research, quality improvement, continuing education, economic evaluation and qualitative research. This is accomplished by selecting original and review articles whose results are most likely to be accurate and clinically useful. The articles are also summarised in abstracts and a commentary by a clinical expert is added. This site contains a large archive of articles organised by category and date as well as useful links to other evidence-related websites.

The Cochrane Collaboration http://www.cochrane.org/

The Cochrane Collaboration is an international non-profit and independent organisation, dedicated to making up-to-date, accurate information about the effects of health care readily available worldwide. It produces and disseminates systematic reviews of health care interventions and promotes the search for evidence in the form of clinical trials and other studies of interventions. The major product of the Collaboration is the Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews published in The Cochrane Library.