

Little evidence on the effectiveness of FFT as a treatment for non-opioid drug use for young people



One study reporting on the effect of FFT on youth drug use shows a short-term (four month) reduction in the use of cannabis

What is the aim of this review?

This Campbell systematic review assesses the effectiveness of FFT to reduce drug abuse (cannabis, amphetamines, ecstasy, or cocaine) among young people aged 11 to 21 years. The review includes two randomised controlled trials, but summarises findings from only one study reporting on the outcome of drug use.

Functional Family Therapy (FFT) is used as a treatment for young peoples' use of cannabis, amphetamines, ecstasy, or cocaine. There is very little evidence of its effectiveness, so it should be used with caution and subject to further evaluation.

What did the review study?

Functional Family Therapy (FFT) is a short-term, manual-based, intervention. It is delivered in outpatient settings and aims to modify interactions between family members to improve youth behavior. This review assesses the effectiveness of FFT as a treatment for young peoples' use of cannabis, amphetamines, ecstasy, or cocaine.

What studies are included?

The review includes controlled trials evaluating the effectiveness of FFT to reduce drug abuse among young people aged 11 to 21 years. Studies included in the review compare the effects of FFT on non-opioid drug use with no intervention, a waitlist condition or with alternative treatments.

Two studies, reported in three papers, are included. Both were conducted in the U.S. Only one provides outcomes related to youth drug use. It compares the effectiveness of FFT with that of alternative treatments.

What are the main results in this review?

The results from the one study reporting on the effect of FFT on youth drug use shows a short-term (four month) reduction in the use of cannabis, an effect that disappears in the longer term.

What do the findings in this review mean?

There is a dearth of evidence on the effectiveness of FFT for the treatment of non-opioid drug use in young people. It is impossible to draw conclusions and as such, FFT should be



used with caution when targeting youth drug use. Agencies supporting FFT should build studies of effectiveness into their programmes.

How up-to-date is this review?

The review authors searched for studies published until July 2013. This Campbell Systematic Review was published in 2015.

What is the Campbell Collaboration?

The Campbell Collaboration is an international, voluntary, non-profit research network that publishes systematic reviews. We summarise and evaluate the quality of evidence about programmes in the social and behavioural sciences. Our aim is to help people make better choices and better policy decisions.

About this summary

This summary was prepared by Sophia Rinaldis (Centre for Evidence and Implementation) based on the Campbell Systematic Review 2015:14 'Functional Family Therapy (FFT) for Young People in Treatment for Non-Opioid Drug Use: A Systematic Review' by Trine Filges, Ditte Anderson, and Anne-Marie Klint Jorgensen (10.4703/csr.2015.14). The summary was redesigned and proofread by Tanya Kristiansen (Campbell Collaboration). Financial support from the American Institutes for Research for the production of this summary is gratefully acknowledged.

