

There is limited evidence of how police programmes to generate community connectedness affect violent extremist behaviours, attitudes and beliefs



Only one study met the review inclusion criteria. This study was conducted in 2015 in the USA.

What is the aim of this review?

This Campbell systematic review examines whether police programmes aiming to improve community connectedness have an effect on violent extremist behaviour, attitudes, and beliefs. It summarises evidence from one study that met the inclusion criteria and references others that describe types of interventions, but that have not been rigorously evaluated.

Police programmes to generate community connectedness are assumed to help reduce risk factors that lead individuals to radicalize to violent extremism. There is no robust body of evaluation evidence to verify this claim. This lack of evidence is because programme funders have not sufficiently invested in impact evaluations of policing programmes that aim to counter violent extremism by promoting community connectedness.

What is this review about?

Community connectedness and efforts to engage communities may help to mitigate the risk of individuals radicalizing to violent extremism. Police, under some circumstances, can play a key role in programmes aimed at tackling violent extremism. This includes working with communities and other agencies to tackle social isolation, economic opportunity, and norms and beliefs that lead individuals and groups to radicalize and support extremist causes.

This review looked at whether or not strategies involving police in the initiation, development or implementation of programmes aimed at community connectedness had an impact on reducing violent extremist beliefs and behaviours.

What studies are included?

The review includes studies that evaluated programmes aimed at countering violent extremism by promoting community connectedness. The interventions included in the review needed to have a police focus, where the intervention involved police as the receivers of an intervention and/or partners in the development, initiation and implementation of a programme. The intervention could be focused on individuals,



How up-to-date is this review?

The review authors searched for studies up to December 2018.

What is the Campbell Collaboration?

Campbell 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 is based on Mazerolle, L, Eggins, E, Cherney, A, Hine, L, Higginson, A, Belton, E. Police programmes that seek to increase community connectedness for reducing violent extremism behaviour, attitudes and beliefs. *Campbell Systematic Reviews*. 2020; 16:e1111. <https://doi.org/10.1002/cl2.1111>.

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places (e.g., schools), neighbourhoods or larger geographical locations.

Although the systematic search captured 2,273 potential studies, only one study met the review inclusion criteria. This study was conducted in 2015 in the USA.

What are the findings of this review?

The one included study was a Muslim community-led initiative involving police that aimed to counter violent extremism through a community-based education and awareness programme. The programme aimed to improve referral networks for agencies/third parties to help assist individuals identified as at-risk of radicalization.

Evidence from this study showed mixed small to medium effects on self-reported deradicalization measures in favour of the treatment group. Eight out of nine calculated effect sizes favoured the intervention, though six of these were statistically insignificant. One survey item favoured the comparison group: “I make friends with people from other races”. However, these results need to be interpreted with caution due to the study limitations.

Given the low number of studies identified, the authors have also provided a summary of a small sample of studies reporting on interventions that aligned with the review topic but did not meet the inclusion criteria due to weak evaluation designs. These studies illustrate a range of approaches being used by the police, such as recreation and sports activities, and community education and engagement around countering violent extremism and related topics.

What do the findings of the review mean?

There is currently insufficient evidence to establish whether police programmes aimed at countering violent extremism by promoting community connectedness are effective. Although the evidence identified by this review shows that such programmes are being implemented, they have not yet been rigorously evaluated. Future research should aim to rigorously evaluate such initiatives.