

Understanding school staff members' enforcement of school tobacco policies: a realist review

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Metodifestivaali 2019

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This project is funded by
the European Union

SILNER

Background

- School tobacco policies (STPs) that aim to achieve a tobacco-free environment require consistent enforcement by school staff.
- Little is known about why staff choose whether or not to enforce STPs.

Aim

- To improve understanding of why staff members in some schools enforce STPs more consistently than others
 - by explicating how contextual factors at different levels (Context) contribute to triggering school staff members' cognitive, psychosocial, and behavioural responses (Mechanism), which may in turn influence their enforcement behavior (Outcome).
- To provide understanding on how stakeholders can support staff members' STP enforcement and consequently improve the impact of STPs on adolescent smoking.

Research question

- We aim to draw together existing evidence and build an evidence-based programme theory that answers the following question
 - How do contextual factors at the individual, interpersonal, school, implementation, and national levels (Context) contribute to triggering staff members' cognitive, psychosocial, and behavioural responses (Mechanism) that may support their STP enforcement (Outcome)?

Method

- An explanatory method that aims to describe what works for whom, under what circumstances, and how.
- A realist review (RR) synthesizes existing primary evidence into a programme theory demonstrating key causal pathways through Context-Mechanism-Outcome configurations (CMOs).
 - Mechanisms are the underlying processes that account for how and why policies or programmes work to bring about changes in the reasoning and behaviour of individuals.

- The realist review consists of six iterative steps (RAMESES):
 - 1) identifying the review questions
 - 2) formulating the initial programme theory
 - 3) searching for primary studies
 - 4) selecting and appraising the studies
 - 5) extracting, analyzing and synthesizing relevant data
 - 6) refining the programme theory.

Formulating the initial program theory

- Hand searching literature review
- Brief interviews

Table 1 Initial programme theory explaining how contextual factors may trigger mechanisms that influence staff's STP enforcement

CMO1: Alignment of staff and overall health promoting culture in the school (C), trigger staff's acceptance and readiness for STP enforcement (M), which may lead to staff members' STP enforcement (O)

CMO2: Inclusion of comprehensive and consistent STPs in school policy document that are packed up by legislation (C), trigger priority of abstinence from smoking at school and staff's significant role in ensuring that (M), which may lead to staff members' STP enforcement (O)

CMO3: Supportive leadership and management (e.g. senior management's actions) (C), trigger shared values and motivation for tobacco-free school among staff (M), which may lead to staff members' STP enforcement (O)

CMO4: Continuous and sustainable focus on STPs and other health issues in school (C), trigger changes in school smoking norms (M), which may lead to staff members' continuous STP enforcement (O)

Searching for primary studies

- A systematic literature search was performed using Academic Search Premier, PsycInfo, and MEDLINE.
 - Search 1: School smoking policies, Search 2: Health promoting programs in school
 - Language limited to English
 - Timeline 2000-2016

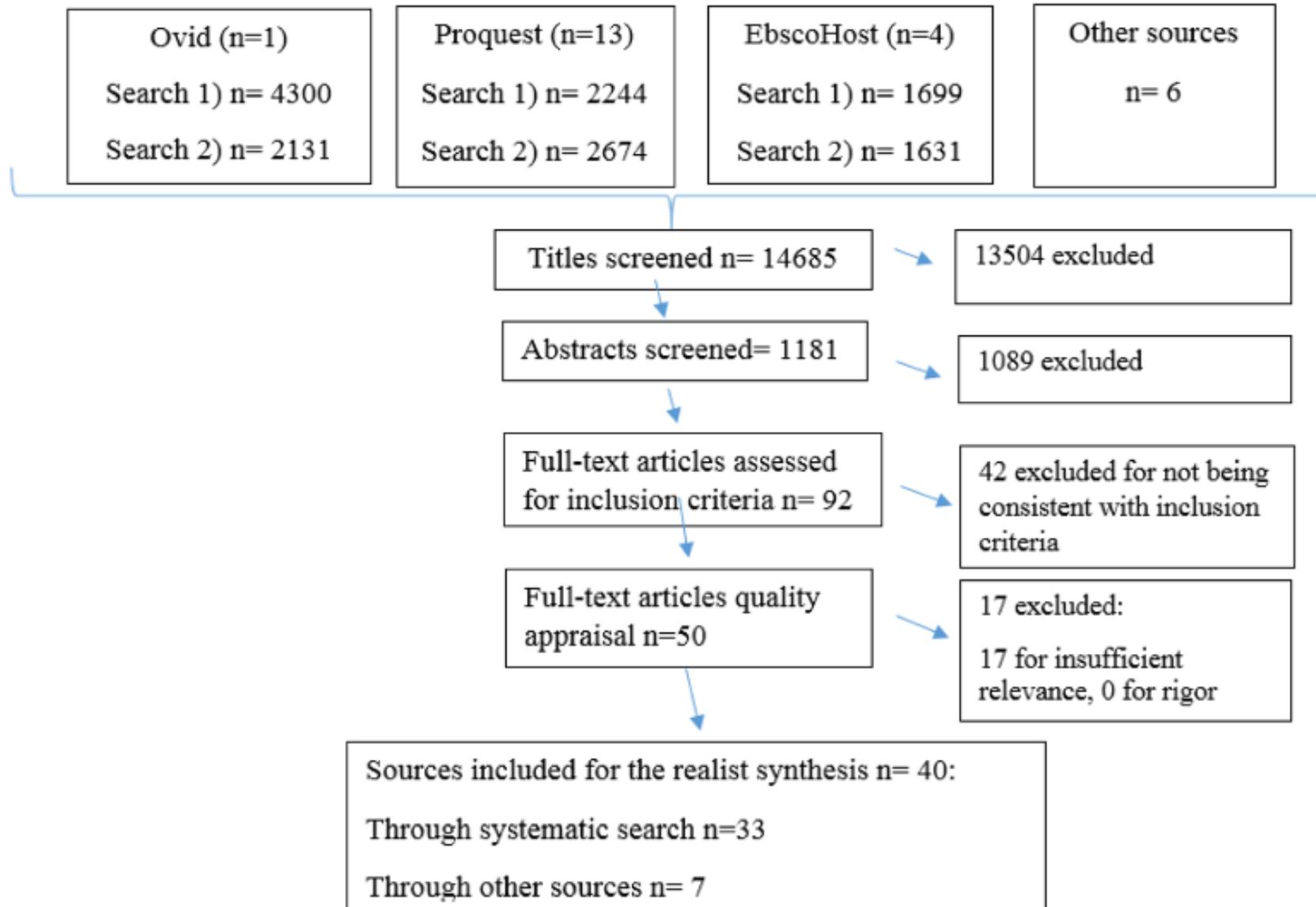
Selecting studies

- 40 articles included for the realist review.
- Inclusion criteria: primary information on one or more of the following themes
 - STP implementation,
 - implementation of health promotion in schools,
 - mechanisms explaining staff members' perceptions and behaviour,
 - information on the school as a context, or
 - other contextual factors influencing STP enforcement in schools.

Appraising quality of the studies

- The quality appraisal for relevance and rigor was performed for the selected pieces of evidence
 - **The relevance** was assessed by the extent to which articles refined, confirmed or added to the initial program theory
 - “Thick”: in-depth information on mechanisms
 - “Thin”: relevant information e.g., on context, not on mechanisms
 - **The rigor** was assessed by examining the sample, data collection, and methods for analysis and how they may have affected the validity of the evidence.

Flow-diagram representing the search, screening and inclusion of the articles



Extracting, analysing and synthesizing relevant data

- The relevant pieces of evidence were extracted from the selected articles in order to refine or substantiate the initial programme theory
 - First, the “thick” evidence to study how contexts, mechanisms, and the staff members’ enforcement are connected (CMOs).
 - Second, the CMO configurations formulated were compared to the thinner evidence to reveal further contextual refinements.

Results

- Revised program theory synthesizes the results and demonstrated three CMOs detected.
- **Revised vs initial** program theory
 - Three instead of four CMOs
 - Multiple new contextual factors and substantiated understanding on CMOs
 - The initial outcome “staff members’ STP enforcement” was revised into three sub-outcomes:
 - responsibility for STP enforcement (CMO1)
 - motivation for STP enforcement (CMO2)
 - confidence for STP enforcement (CMO3)

CMO1

- When contextual factors (C) make staff experience STP as part of their professional role and duties (M), it may lead staff members' responsibility for STP enforcement (O).
- Key contextual factors that may trigger responsibility are
 - the staff members' professional identity and values (e.g., they appreciate school health promotion) and
 - perceptions that enforcement does not considerably burden them or negatively influence staff-student relationships

CMO2

- When contextual factors (C) make staff perceive that their contribution is leading to positive outcomes (M), it may lead to staff's motivation for STP enforcement (O).
- Key contextual factors that may trigger motivation are
 - the staff members' perception that schools can compensate for negative peer and family influences and
 - their perception that all colleagues are doing their part and participating in enforcement

CMO3

- When contextual factors (C) make staff feel that they are able to deal with students' responses (M), it may lead to staff's confidence for STP enforcement (O).
- Key contextual factors that may trigger confidence are
 - the staff members' own smoking status
 - non-familiarity with students, and
 - the expectation that students will respond aggressively

Discussion

- Ability to extend the contemporary understanding by thoroughly specifying how contextual factors at different levels may influence staff members' STP enforcement.
- In order to support staff enforcement, it is important to examine and address
 - 1) the influence of contextual factors also beyond the school level factors
 - E.g. national context: National policies have an important role in making staff members feel that STP enforcement is part of their professional role and responsibility (CMO1).
 - 2) the interconnections between CMOs
 - E.g., Staff's responsibility (CMO1) and confidence (CMO3) support all staff members' consistent STP enforcement leading to positive outcome expectations and motivation for STP enforcement (CMO2).

- In-depth understanding offers **insights for policymakers and stakeholders** on how to support staff members' STP enforcement and thereby the effectiveness of STPs on adolescent smoking.
 - E.g., staff's positive outcomes may decrease if implementing and enforcing smoking bans on the school premises leads to smoking outside the school's boundaries and increased smoking visibility (CMO2).
 - Prohibit students from leaving the grounds during school hours (a smoke-free time for all adolescents)
 - Government policy that permits schools to enforce the smoking rules during school hours outside the areas that fall under schools' formal jurisdiction

Thank you!

