



Effectiveness of Psychosocial Intervention to Improve the Mental Health in Men who Have Sex with Men (MSM): A Systematic Review and Meta-analysis

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Introduction:

Men who have sex with men (MSM) are vulnerable to mental health problems. Some psychosocial interventions showed different effects on various mental health aspects, but the exact pooled effect size was uncertain. This study aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of psychosocial interventions for mental health among MSM.

Methods:

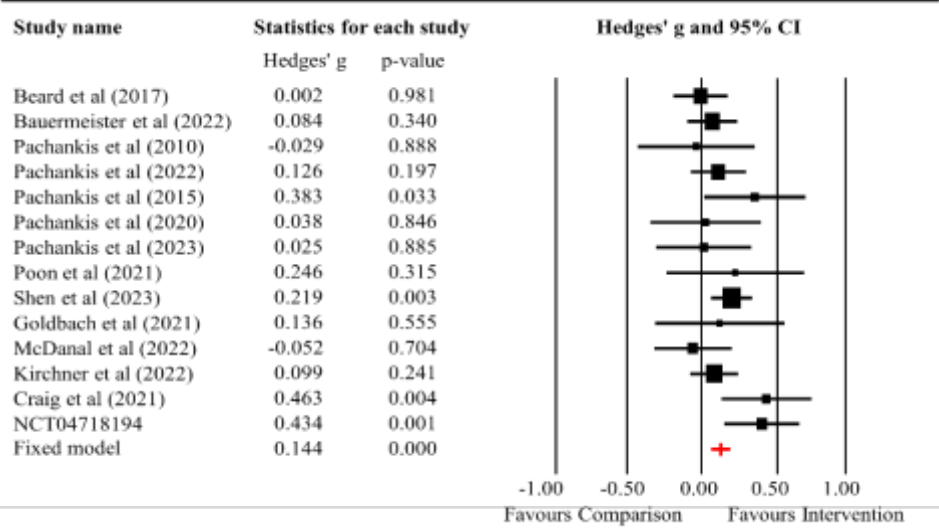
We searched six databases (PubMed, PsycINFO, EmBase, Cochrane Library, ClinicalTrials and ICTRP) from database inception to March 4, 2024. We included randomised controlled trials and quasi-experimental studies of psychosocial interventions aimed at improving the mental health of MSM. The outcomes were the effect sizes of overall mental health and specific aspects (depressive symptoms, anxiety symptoms, substance abuse, suicidal ideation, stress, coping, emotion, social function and identity). The fixed-effect or random-effect model was adopted to calculate the effect sizes. The study was registered with PROSPERO (CRD42024551392).

Results:

We included 14 studies conducted between 2010 and 2024. The effect size of intervention for overall mental health status was 0.14 (95%CI: 0.08-0.21, n=14, I²=28.23%).

The interventions had positive effects in :

- depressive symptoms (0.25,0.09-0.41),
- anxiety symptoms (0.20, 0.12-0.29),
- substance abuse (0.19, 0.10-0.28),
- stress (0.18, 0.03-0.33),
- coping (0.21, 0.06-0.36),
- emotion (0.16, 0.06-0.25,
- identity (0.19, 0.07-0.30).



Conclusion:

Psychosocial interventions have a small-to-moderate effect on improving the mental health status of the MSM. Our study provides a comprehensive evaluation of the intervention effect, with estimations of overall mental health status and some specific aspects.