Qeios

Peer Review

Review of: "Benefits to Mental Wellbeing from Making Positive Changes in Health-Related Behaviours: An Ultra-Rapid Review"

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Background context/introduction

I think you could better 'sell' the need to pull this literature review and evidence synthesis together. For example, you identify that it might be useful from a public health messaging perspective to be able to promote health behaviour change not just for its impact on physical health but also on mental health and wellbeing. The rationale could be made more powerful by highlighting that our cultural and environmental contexts often market and promote poor diet and alcohol consumption and make active lifestyles difficult to achieve. Making the four identified health behaviour changes requires a lot of mental and physical resources, and it can take time to reap the physical benefits of things like improved diet and increased physical activity. Rapidly improved mental wellbeing as an outcome may provide a much greater motivating message in this context. It might also be useful to cite some data on levels of poor mental wellbeing/life satisfaction, etc., as well as part of the background/context information. It would also be useful to highlight that people perhaps commonly understand that physical activity is good for mental health and improving wellbeing, but there is a much less common understanding of the relationship between the other behaviours and mental health and wellbeing.

Method

In the section titled phase 1 – you state that 'The most recent reviews were assessed for quality and relevance and their conclusions extracted,' having previously stated that the search was from papers from 2000 or later. Which is it, and how did you decide what counted as 'most recent'?

doi.org/10.32388/D34GUS

In phase 2, there is reference to supplementary papers, but it is not clear where I can find these. After finishing reading, I can see they are in a downloadable zip file at the end – add the link to this at first mention as well?

I cannot access the pre-print via the link – it lands on a page that is osf.io/forbidden, and I get a message saying 'you don't have permission to perform this action.' This should not be happening, and I have emailed support@osf.io to report this. To complete the review, I would want to review the pre-reg methods.

Unplanned analyses

It is fine to report additional analyses from those which were pre-registered and identify these as such, but it would be helpful to understand how, when, and why within the process of conducting this rapid review you decided these additional unplanned analyses were needed. Please provide a bit more explanation about this. Had you, for example, conducted some of your synthesis work and then identified the need for this? This will provide a more transparent account of the work.

Results

Alcohol reduction

It would be helpful to understand how the identified literature classified high-risk and moderate drinking so we can get a sense of any variation in how this was assessed.

Diet improvement

Similarly, knowing how this was assessed in studies would be useful.

Although the review narrative is quite sparse in content, it is useful for busy public health professionals who typically need to get to the core messages and takeaways from the evidence so that the findings can be applied in policy, commissioning, and practice.

Declarations

Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.