A systematic review of parenting interventions to prevent child abuse

LAURA MCCLOSKEY

PROFESSOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH
DIRECTOR
CENTER FOR RESEARCH ON HEALTH DISPARITIES
INDIANA UNIVERSITY
BLOOMINGTON IN
Very High Income Countries Sponsoring Research on Parenting Interventions

- CA (Canada)
- USA (United States of America)
- UK (United Kingdom)
- NZ (New Zealand)
- AU (Australia)
Selected 22 Evaluation Studies

Criteria for inclusion:

- Interventions directed at parenting
- Random Controlled Trial (RCT)
- Outcomes reflecting child abuse
- Published sources
Sample programs

- Healthy Start
- Nurse Family Partnership (Nurse visiting)
- Triple P
- Incredible years
- Infant Parent Psychotherapy
- Supporting Fathers Prevention
## Program Features

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Feature</th>
<th>Number of Programs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Home visiting only</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mothers exclusively</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fathers exclusively</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duration 8 weeks or less</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sample Outcomes

- Observations

- Parent-self report
  - harsh parenting
  - child abuse potential
  - parenting stress

- Official child abuse reports
Potential for bias in measuring outcomes

- Records
- Observation
- Self-report

LOW to HIGH
Percent of studies addressing other sources of bias

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Bias</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sequence Generation</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allocation Concealment</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessor Blind</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attrition &lt; 25%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## What programs stand out as effective?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study and Year</th>
<th>Intervention</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Findings &amp; Effect size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cicchetti et al (2006)</td>
<td>Infant-Parent Attachment</td>
<td>Attachment classification</td>
<td>Disorganized attachment declined by half  Large</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olds et al (1997)</td>
<td>Nurse family partnership</td>
<td>Child abuse reports</td>
<td>Lower for treatment group Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linares (2006)</td>
<td>Incredible Years</td>
<td>Self-reports</td>
<td>Positive differences Small</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prinz et al (2009)</td>
<td>Triple -P</td>
<td>Child abuse reports</td>
<td>Lower for families in Triple P Large</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dawe (2007)</td>
<td>PUP</td>
<td>Observational, self-report</td>
<td>Improved scores on PUP parents v. controls Small</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bugental &amp; Schwartz</td>
<td>Enriched Healthy Families</td>
<td>Observational, self-report</td>
<td>Lower abuse scores for those in Enriched vs. Standard Health Families</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Surprisingly weak findings

- Healthy Start
  - Dumont, Duggan, MacMillan
- Early Start Home Visiting
  - Fergusson
- Father-only interventions
  - Cowan
- Multi-systemic therapy
  - Henggeler
Conclusions

- Weak effects for popular programs
  - But enhancing programs may improve effectiveness

- Clinic-based programs hard to replicate globally

- Cost-effectiveness rarely addressed
What is needed

- Innovation
- Cultural competence
- Prudence
Linking Intervention - to Parenting – to Child aggression

- Abusive Parenting
- Intervention
- Improved Parenting
- Child Outcome
- Reduce of Cycle of Violence
Should interventions be gender-based?

- Should interventions address gender bias against women and mothers directly?
- Should attitudes toward male and female children be addressed?
- Are gender stereotypes of parents modifiable?
Rapid changes in parenting expectations across regions and cultures