

Valdez, E. S., Skobic, I., Valdez, L., O Garcia, D., Korchmaros, J., Stevens, S., Sabo, S., & Carvajal, S. (2020). Youth Participatory Action Research for Youth Substance Use Prevention: A Systematic Review. *Substance Use & Misuse*, 55(2), 314–328. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10826084.2019.1668014>

Title of evidence summary

Youth-led digital media campaigns – an intervention to engage youth as advocates for NCD prevention

Who is this summary for?

Adolescents

Focus

The focus is on engaging and training a group of young people at risk of developing NCDs related to tobacco and air pollution (AP) exposure. The deliverable will be to co-create a podcast series aimed at providing peer support and awareness-raising for tobacco prevention, and employing social media tactics for promotion and dissemination.

Key findings/recommendations

- Youth participation in research and social action through Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) resulted in increased community awareness of substance use and solutions.
- Findings support youth participation as agents of community change by producing community-specific substance use prevention materials
- Youth increased knowledge about tobacco & other substances and participated in advocacy and policy change. Communities benefited through community-tailored substance use-specific data, programs and materials, and positive perceptions of youth to agents of change
- Three studies reported skills training and all 15 studies described some type of action plan (e.g., reaching policy makers), social action activity (e.g., community presentation), or deliverable (e.g., community-tailored tobacco prevention video) as the culminating element of the participatory project

Areas of uncertainty or lack of evidence

- Outcome evaluation measures were not consistent, and there was a lack of long-term outcomes reported across all studies
- Possible publication bias since many similar projects go unpublished
- Some studies did not establish formal agreements with youth, resulting in questionable distribution of power in the process

Date of search strategy/how up to date

- Systematic review of articles published from January 1, 1998 through April 30, 2018

List countries featured/whether low, middle, high income

- Lack of LMIC research, one study in Bosnia Herzegovina, all others based in US and Canada

Implementation considerations

- Most participants were 10-18 years of age, and most interventions targeted youth of vulnerable backgrounds including rural, indigenous, street-involved, refugee, LGBTQ, conflict survivors, etc.
- Fidelity to the YPAR approach requires that youth are involved in every step of the research process, but most studies involved youth in the later phases (e.g. dissemination)
- Importance of enhanced power sharing and equitable decision-making between researchers and youth

Quality of the evidence

Valdez et al: High, use of PRISMA guidelines to systematically examine the YPAR approach among 15 studies included in the analysis

Citation for any linked full evidence review

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Languages the review is available in (can use [ISO codes](#))

Other sources of information