

The Effectiveness of a School-Based Addiction Prevention Program: Pilot Evaluation of Rajasthan Addiction Prevention Project

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Abstract : Background: It is widely acknowledged globally that parents must advocate for their children's drug and substance abuse prevention. However, many parents find it difficult to advocate due to systemic and logistical barriers. Alternatives to introducing advocacy, awareness, and support for the prevention of drug and substance abuse to children could occur in schools. However, little research has been conducted on the development of advocates for substance abuse in school settings. Objective: to evaluate the effectiveness of a school-based addiction prevention and control created as part of the Rajasthan Addiction Prevention Project (a partnership between state-community initiative). Methods: We conducted an evaluation in this study to determine the impact of a RAPP on a primary outcome (substance abuse knowledge) and other outcomes (family-school partnership, empowerment, and support). Specifically, between September-December 2022, two schools participated in the intervention group (advocacy training), and two schools participated in the control group (waiting list). The RAPP designed specialised 2-hrs training to equip teachers-parents with the knowledge and skills necessary to advocate for their own children and those of other families. All participants were required to complete a pre- and post-survey. Results: The intervention group established school advocates in schools where trained parents volunteered to lead support groups for high-risk children. Compared to the participants in the wait list control group, those in the intervention group demonstrated greater education knowledge, $P = 0.002$, and self-mastery, $P = 0.04$, and decreased family-school partnership quality, $P = 0.002$. Conclusions: The experimental evaluation of school-based advocacy programme revealed positive effects on substance abuse that persist over time. The approach was deemed feasible and acceptable by both parents and the school.

Keywords : prevention, school based, addiction, advocacy

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