



Intervention with pregnant women and mothers who use psychotropic drugs

To meet the needs of pregnant women and mothers who use psychotropic drugs, integrated early intervention during pregnancy is recommended. The goal of this article is to provide a summary of current findings about the effectiveness of intervention models that foster integration of services for this clientele. Results show that integrated treatment models produce favourable effects on changes in substance use behaviour, baby's health at birth, the woman's commitment to the process, emotional interaction and functioning. However, methodological limitations (sample composition and size, target population, age) and the variety of study designs used limit the ability to collect evidence for each intervention modality. Therefore, further research is needed to better document the potential of integrated treatment programs, especially over the long term.

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Issue and Objective

Because of the potential consequences of substance use, pregnant women and mothers were identified as a priority group in terms of access to addiction services. Indeed, various experts in this field have issued recommendations for testing, counselling and interdisciplinary biomedical and psychosocial interventions. In this sense, although many publications address this topic, what is really known about the effectiveness of integrated treatment programs on substance use behaviours, pregnancy outcome or parental practices? To our knowledge, the effectiveness of integrated treatment programs has been only scantily documented using meta-analyses. Essentially, a meta-analysis refers to a literature review used to pool the literature on a topic, assess the quality of studies retained in terms of methodology used (sampling method, type of measure, presence or not of a comparison group, random distribution between groups or not) and evaluate the effect size. The objective of this article is to assess the state of knowledge about the effectiveness of various integrated treatment programs with this clientele, using recent relevant publications.

Highlights

1. The abundance of scientific articles on parenting and addiction reveals efforts made to respond to the needs of this clientele.
2. The variety of methodological approaches used makes it difficult to compare program effectiveness. Nonetheless, experts in this field have established some guidelines and recommendations for integrated treatment programs.
3. Observed results indicate that integrated treatment programs have greater effects.
 - a. Compared with absence of treatment, we observe
 - a reduction in substance use;
 - a higher number of women obtaining negative toxicology test results (indicating abstinence);
 - an effect on birth weight, head circumference and fewer complications at birth.
 - b. Compared with non-integrated treatment programs, we observe
 - more women going to prenatal follow-up;
 - a tendency not to give birth prematurely;
 - improved emotional interaction with the child and improved functioning.



Conclusion

The goal of this article was to provide a summary of current findings about the effectiveness of intervention models that foster integration of services for pregnant women and mothers who use psychotropic drugs. Although program heterogeneity makes it difficult to collect evidence, some experts provided recommendations in favour of service integration. Indeed, the results show that integrated treatment programs significantly contribute to changes in substance use behaviours, pregnancy outcome and parental practices. These findings can offer guidance to service providers, in particular for development of intervention plans or any other strategies to encourage those women to commit to treatment. For instance, an intervention plan can simultaneously integrate objectives and methods that target reduction or elimination of consumption and parental practices. Subsequently, it would be useful to conduct further studies using more robust study designs, such as randomized trials, to better document the potential of integrated treatment programs. It could also be useful to evaluate the effectiveness of combining necessary services or when to deliver those services to contribute to successful pregnancy. Lastly, it would be appropriate to look at the severity of substance use behaviours, types of substances used and characteristics of pregnant women and mothers on pregnancy outcomes.

Keywords

- / Addiction
- / Pregnant women
- / Mothers
- / Service integration

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