Parenting programmes in low and middle income countries: a realist review protocol

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01/11/2018
Background

• Parenting is the process of supporting the physical, psycho-social and cognitive development of a child from infancy to adulthood (Winter, 2011) and its quality is crucial to children’s health and life chances (Scott, 2012).

• Parenting programmes are formal interventions undertaken with the intention of improving the knowledge, skills, and confidence of parents to enhance the well-being of the child.

• This review is concerned with parenting programmes in low and middle income countries (LMIC’s), defined in accordance with World Bank classifications (World Bank, 2016).

• Ninety percent of the world’s child and adolescent population live in LMIC’s (Joshi, 2016), 200 million of which are at risk of not meeting their developmental potential by the age of 5 (Grantham-McGregor, et al 2007).

• To our knowledge, this review is the first to assess the evidence supporting parenting programmes in LMIC’s using realist methods.
Realist Methods

- Realist reviews are most commonly used in the evaluation of complex interventions consisting of multiple components and outcomes (Wong et al, 2013).
- Alternative to ‘cause and effect’ methods of analysis; aim to analyse contexts, mechanisms and outcomes (CMO’s) to explain what works, for whom and in what circumstances (Pawson, 2005).
- The development of CMO theory is central to realist approaches.
Review questions

1. What are the mechanisms by which parenting programmes in LMIC’s might be effective in achieving their intended outcomes?

2. What are the contexts which determine whether the different mechanisms produce their intended outcome?

3. In what circumstances are parenting programmes likely to be effective?
Study design

This review will follow the five-stage process proposed by Pawson (2005):

Step 1. Define the review parameters
Step 2. Search for the evidence
Step 3. Appraise primary studies and extract data
Step 4. Synthesise the evidence and draw conclusions
Step 5. Disseminate, implement and evaluate
Inclusion and exclusion criteria

Inclusion criteria:

• Parenting programmes undertaken in low or middle income countries.

• Parenting programmes targeting children and adolescents up to and including the age of 18.

• Parenting programmes targeting all parent (i.e. mothers, fathers, couples, adoptive or foster parents, grandparents undertaking a parenting role, other caregivers acting as parents)

• All parenting programme delivery methods (i.e. one-one, home visits, group based or e-learning)

Exclusion criteria:

• Parenting programmes undertaken in high income countries
Summary

- Dearth of evidence relating to the value of parenting programmes conducted in LMIC’s.
- The findings of this review will provide important insight into how, why and to what extent parenting programmes achieve their intended goals.
- By highlighting the causal mechanisms at work in parenting programmes, future research may focus on the impact of parenting programmes on parental performance and child developmental outcomes.
References


