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Working on mental health stigma in education: a multicenter community-based clinical trial

Submission date
20/08/2024

Recruitment status
No longer recruiting

Registration date
20/08/2024

Overall study status
Completed

Last Edited
16/07/2025

Condition category
Mental and Behavioural Disorders

[ ] Prospectively registered
[ ] Protocol
[ ] Statistical analysis plan
[X] Results
[ ] Individual participant data

Plain English summary of protocol

Background and study aims
According to the World Health Organization (WHO), one in seven adolescents worldwide aged 10-19 has a mental health problem; emotional disorders, eating disorders and psychosis are the most prevalent. In Spain, the percentage of adolescents with a diagnosed psychopathological disorder is 20.8% (21.4% girls and 20.4% boys), which places it at the top of the European countries with the highest prevalence of mental health disorders in this type of population. This increase in prevalence from previous years may be related to the context and restrictive protective measures that were put in place in the COVID-19 pandemic. In this regard, evidence has shown that such restrictions appeared to predispose people to anxiety, social isolation and depressive symptoms, among others, facilitating the emergence of new cases of adolescents with mental health problems, aggravating the situation of those most vulnerable and leading to negative consequences that could persist in the long term.
This is why national and international institutions such as the Spanish Ministry of Health and the WHO, through the publication of action plans, have emphasised the need to carry out community interventions related to the prevention and promotion of mental health in the adolescent population from all areas, highlighting the school context and the role of teachers. This approach is supported by the scientific literature, which shows that the educational setting is an ideal context for reaching a large number of adolescents and is also conceived as a safe environment for mental health promotion, since the school year involves contact with students for a long period of time, and teachers accompany them throughout the school day. In addition, at present, among the different competencies of teachers is that of acquiring knowledge and attitudes about mental health so that they can be agents of reference for the adolescent population in the classroom, encouraging active help-seeking and accompanying adolescents during their period of growth and in any kind of need related to mental health.
However, in order to become support agents, teachers have to be given appropriate training in mental health. In this regard, recent research has not only shown that teachers' knowledge and training in mental health is low, but they also have other limitations related to skills shortages, such as a lack of confidence in their performance and a lack of engagement with their students. Stigma is also a major barrier to addressing mental health problems in general and, in school settings, contributes to social isolation, minimisation of symptoms and poorer management of the consequences of mental health disorders.
It is also important to take into account that in Spain, teachers do not include in their curricula

systematic training in mental health that includes the recognition and early detection of the most prevalent mental disorders in adolescence, the identification and management of risk and protective factors for mental health in the classroom, active help-seeking or anti-stigma interventions.
Therefore, given the evident need for mental health training programmes for high school teachers, including the reduction of stigmatising attitudes and beliefs, and taking into account that the current curricula do not contemplate this content, researchers propose carrying out a teacher training programme led by a mental health nurse, as this group of health professionals plays an essential role in health education and promotion, including mental health, both for the general population and for the specific population through preventive measures and community approach strategies.
The main goal of this research is therefore to evaluate the effectiveness of a training programme in the prevention and promotion of mental health, delivered by a mental health nurse, in order to reduce stigmatising attitudes (Anti-stigma Training Programme) among teachers from different high schools in the self-governing region of Valencia, Spain.

Who can participate?
High school teachers working full-time at participating schools

What does the study involve?
The anti-stigma training programme was delivered by a mental health nurse, in a face-to-face format over four different sessions (each lasting 2 hours) in consecutive weeks. All the sessions were held at the schools themselves during teachers' working hours in July 2023, as the school term was over and teachers had more time available. There were no financial incentives or incentives of any kind for the teachers taking part, and there were no adverse effects during the programme or after it finished.

What are the possible benefits and risks of participating?
First, teachers should increase knowledge related to health prevention and promotion while reducing stigmatizing attitudes related to it. Secondly, this will make it possible to reduce erroneous beliefs and be a support figure for adolescents if necessary. It will also allow them to work on mental health in the classroom at any time, as well as acquire skills in crisis care. There is no risk in participating.

Where is the study run from?
Jaume I University (Spain)

When is the study starting and how long is it expected to run for?
September 2021 to December 2023

Who is funding the study?
1. General Council of Nursing of Spain
2. College of Nursing of Valencia (Spain)
3. Jaume I University (Spain)

Who is the main contact?
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Contact information

Type(s)

Public, Scientific, Principal investigator

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Additional identifiers

Protocol serial number
PI06072022

Study information

Scientific Title
Prevention and promotion of mental health through an anti-stigma intervention led by psychiatric nursing and aimed at high school teachers in Spain: a non-randomized multicenter community clinical trial

Study objectives
The main goal of this research is therefore to evaluate the effectiveness of a training programme in the prevention and promotion of mental health, delivered by a mental health nurse, in order to reduce stigmatising attitudes (Anti-stigma Training Programme) among teachers from different high schools in the self-governing region of Valencia, Spain.

Ethics approval required
Ethics approval required

Ethics approval(s)
Approved 13/05/2022, Research Ethics Committee - Research Commission of the Department of Health of La Ribera of the Valencian Community, University Hospital of La Ribera de Alzira (km 1, Ctra. Corbera, 46600 Alzira, Valencia, Alzira, 46600, Spain; +34 (0)962542800; broch_marcas@gva.es), ref: PI06072022

Primary study design
Interventional

Study design
Multicentre community-based non-randomized clinical trial

Study type(s)
Other, Prevention

Health condition(s) or problem(s) studied
Mental health

Interventions
The anti-stigma training programme was developed based on the available scientific evidence and the content of guides, manuals and recommendations of both experts and prestigious national and international entities in the field of mental health.

The content of the programme focused on training on the risk and protective factors present in the adolescent period, the reduction of stigmatising beliefs, the definition of the role that teachers should play in this area, and training on the algorithm of action and the social and health resources available in the region. The anti-stigma programme was evaluated by professionals in the field of psychiatry and university lecturers and its usefulness was assessed in a previous pilot study, reporting favourable results.

The intervention was thus composed of four different thematic blocks and divided into four different sessions (prevention and promotion of mental health in adolescence; stigma and psychoeducation in psychosis; emotions and healthy emotional regulation; and algorithm of action and referral to the health system). In each session, the contents were shown by means of a digital presentation and were complemented with methods and techniques of group education.

The anti-stigma training programme was delivered by a mental health nurse, in a face-to-face format over four different sessions (each lasting 2 hours) in consecutive weeks. All the sessions were held at the schools themselves during teachers' working hours in July 2023, as the school term was over and teachers had more time available. There were no financial incentives or incentives of any kind for the teachers taking part, and there were no adverse effects during the programme or after it finished.

Intervention Type
Behavioural

Primary outcome(s)
Level of stigma measured using the Attribution Questionnaire-27 (AQ-27) scale. In both the experimental and control groups, the participating teachers answered the AQ-27 scale before the training programme (T0). Subsequently, the experimental group answered the AQ-27 after the end of the programme (T1) and at the 3-month follow-up (T2). The control group were not given the training programme, and so only answered the AQ-27 scale at T2.

Key secondary outcome(s)
An ad hoc questionnaire was drawn up to collect the socio-demographic data of the participating teachers (gender, age, number of children, work experience, place of residence, level of studies), and a set of variables to determine their experience with students with mental health problems (tutoring students, familiarity with mental health services, familiarity with self-harm and/or suicidal behaviour, crisis care and perceived feelings during care). Completed before the training programme (T0).

Completion date

18/12/2023

Eligibility

Key inclusion criteria
Participants:
1. Working full-time at the school at the time of submission of the programme
2. Spanish as native language or official accreditation of a high level of Spanish (C1)
3. Willingness to attend 100% of the sessions
4. Signing the informed consent form

Educational establishments
1. Public or private
2. Compulsory Secondary Education and/or Baccalaureate (from the age of 12 years)

Participant type(s)
Employee

Healthy volunteers allowed
No

Age group
Adult

Lower age limit
18 Years

Upper age limit
70 Years

Sex
All

Total final enrolment
169

Key exclusion criteria
Participants:
1. Working part-time and/or being on leave of absence and/or sick leave
2. Showing conditions that make it impossible to answer the questionnaire (motor, hearing, visual or speech functional diversity)
3. Previous participation in a similar programme

Educational establishments:
1. Special education schools
2. Schools whose official language is not Spanish/Valencian

Date of first enrolment
15/05/2023

Date of final enrolment
14/06/2023

Locations

Countries of recruitment
Spain

Study participating centre
Jose Maria Parra Secondary Education Institute
Carrer del Doctor Francesc Bono, 3, 46600 Alzira, Valencia
Alzira
Spain
46600

Study participating centre
IES Sucro
C/ José Miguel Perales Balaguer, s/n, 46687 Albalat de la Ribera, Valencia
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Spain
46687

Sponsor information

Organisation
Jaume I University

ROR
https://ror.org/02ws1xc11

Funder(s)

Funder type
University/education

Funder Name
Universitat Jaume I

Alternative Name(s)
Universitat Jaume I de Castelló, Universitat Jaume I de Castellón, UJI

Funding Body Type
Private sector organisation

Funding Body Subtype
Universities (academic only)

Location
Spain

Funder Name
General Council of Nursing Spain

Funder Name
College of Nursing of Valencia

Results and Publications

Individual participant data (IPD) sharing plan
The datasets generated during and/or analysed during the current study will be stored in a non-publicly available repository (Department of Health of La Ribera of the Valencian Community, University Hospital of La Ribera de Alzira).

At the schools in the study, the programme protocol was explained. Both the school management and the teachers who took part did so voluntarily. The privacy and confidentiality of both their personal data and the answers to the questionnaires were guaranteed.

IPD sharing plan summary
Stored in non-publicly available repository, Available on request

Study outputs

Output type	Details	Date created	Date added	Peer reviewed?	Patient-facing?
Results article		27/06/2025	16/07/2025	Yes	No