

Training program outcomes for mental health professionals: The role of methodological quality, study type, and timing. A meta-analysis

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This study aims to analyze the effectiveness of training programs designed for mental health professionals. The analysis focuses on randomized controlled trials (RCTs) and cluster-randomized studies, examining the impact of these interventions across three levels of outcomes (based on Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick's model): knowledge acquisition, attitude changes, and behavioral modifications. The study includes 18 eligible studies, each meeting rigorous inclusion criteria, and evaluates the moderating effects of methodological quality, study type, and intervention duration. Methodological quality was assessed using the 10-item Methodological Quality Scale, providing a standardized measure to gauge the robustness of the included studies. The analysis further investigates the differential effects of research design studies (RCTs versus clusters) and intervention and measurement times. Three distinct meta-analyses were conducted to integrate the outcomes across the selected levels. Preliminary findings suggest a positive overall effect size, with decreasing magnitude observed as the analysis progresses from knowledge to attitudes and, ultimately, to behaviors. These results align with the hypothesis of diminishing returns through the hierarchical pyramid of training impact. This work underscores the critical importance of methodological rigor and contextual factors in determining the efficacy of training programs in mental health services. Insights from this analysis provide actionable evidence to enhance future program design, implementation, and evaluation.

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