

Group behaviour therapy sessions effective for smoking cessation

Clinical Question	How effective are group-delivered behavioural interventions in achieving long-term smoking cessation?
Bottom Line	Group therapy was better for helping people stop smoking than self-help, and other less intensive interventions. If five percent of people were able to quit for at least six months using self-help materials, 8-12 percent might be successful if offered group support. The quality of this evidence was moderate, because studies did not report methods in enough detail to exclude possible bias. There was also evidence of a benefit of group support compared to advice and brief support from a healthcare professional, although the difference was smaller and more variable. This was rated as low-quality evidence, because of the variability as well as possible risk of bias. There was also low-quality evidence of a benefit in studies that did not provide the control group with any help to quit. Most studies followed participants for 12 months.
Caveat	There was not enough evidence to evaluate whether groups were more effective, or cost-effective, than intensive individual counselling. There was not enough evidence to support the use of particular psychological components in a programme beyond the support and skills training normally included. It was not possible to show which components of group-based programmes were most helpful.
Context	One approach to help people who are trying to quit smoking is to offer them group-based support. Participants meet regularly, with a facilitator who is typically trained in smoking cessation counselling. Programme components are varied. A perceived strength of this approach is that participants provide each other with support and encouragement. The outcome of interest was not smoking at least six months from the start of the group programme.
Cochrane Systematic Review	Stead LF et al. Group behaviour therapy programmes for smoking cessation. Cochrane Reviews, 2017, Issue 3. Art. No.: CD001007.DOI: 10.1002/14651858.CD001007.pub3. This review contains 66 studies involving over 21,200 participants.

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Cochrane systematic review:

<https://www.cochranelibrary.com/cdsr/doi/10.1002/14651858.CD001007.pub3/full#CD001007>