ABSTRACT

Background: Smoking cessation is associated with significant health benefits. A review on the effectiveness of cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) in smoking cessation would help identify proven effective interventions and enable more informed treatment decisions.

Objective: The aim of this theoretical review is to map the effectiveness of CBT and its components in smoking cessation using a non-systematic search.

Methods: 272 reviews published in English in the last 10 years were found in the PubMed database using keywords. These were sorted out and supplemented with other articles for a total of 108 processed articles.

Results: The effectiveness of CBT in smoking cessation as a stand-alone treatment or treatment enhancing the pharmacotherapy has been demonstrated in large clinical trials, both in individual (RR vs. minimal intervention 1.57 (1.40 - 1.77)) and in group counseling (RR vs. self-help program 1.88 (1.52 - 2.33)). The effectiveness increased with the intensity of the therapy. Of the individual components, commitment, feedback to behavior, social reward, identity associated with changed behavior and financial reward were significantly effective. Information about emotional consequences and reframing the slip had a significantly negative impact. The effectiveness of improving coping skills in preventing relapse has not been demonstrated.

Recommendation: The results support the use of CBT in smoking cessation. Caution is in order when motivating the client with the positive emotional consequences and when reframing the slip. In relapse prevention, it will be useful to look for alternatives to improving coping skills, and to pay more attention to follow-up. Until we demonstrate the effective elements with greater certainty, it seems safest to reinforce abstinence via multiple approaches.