

**In Europe behavioural prevention interventions are currently implemented without a standard prior evaluation of their effectiveness, possibly leading to inefficient use of resources or even harmful effects**

**effectiveness  
 prevention interventions  
 evaluation  
 implementation**

Behavioural prevention interventions are complementary to prevention policies and have the potential to play a major role in reducing the burden of diseases associated to drug abuse and addiction. However, in Europe, no prior evaluation is required for the implementation of prevention interventions, thus leading to widespread dissemination of potentially ineffective or harmful interventions.

To tackle the overuse of interventions without scientific evidence and the underuse of effective interventions, and to foster the implementation and dissemination of effective interventions, Europe needs a central, transparent, evidence-based, context-aware, and research-oriented approval process for behavioral prevention interventions. This process would allow decision makers and implementers to access the necessary information and materials to select the best prevention intervention for any specific needs. Similarly to medicine approval systems, such a new approval process could be based on four consequential phases evaluating the effect of the following: single components (phase 1); combinations of components (phase 2); the final intervention-comprising only components found effective in the previous phases-via large, multicentre, randomized trials whenever possible (phase 3); and the long-term effects as well as the effects in different contexts (phase 4). Once phase 3 shows convincing results, the intervention would be approved for delivery to its target population.

An approval process for behavioural interventions to prevent drug abuse and addiction is likely to lead to positive consequences both for practice, by strengthening the role and impact of prevention in times of limited economic resources, and for research, by promoting the robust evaluation of all promising prevention interventions.

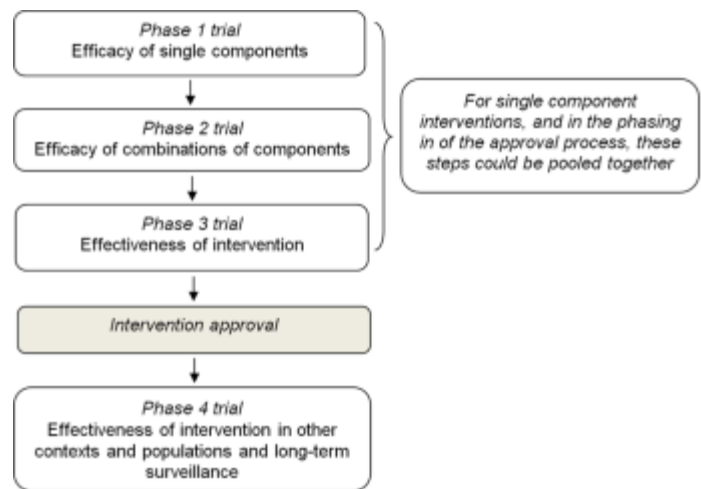


Figure: Proposal for a four-step evaluation and approval process of prevention interventions for drug abuse and addiction

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Faggiano, F., Allara, E., Giannotta, F., Molinar, R., Sumnall, H., Wiers, R., Michie, S., Collins, L., & Conrod, P.: [Europe Needs a Central, Transparent, and Evidence-Based Approval Process for Behavioural Prevention Interventions](#). PLOS Medicine, 2014, 11 (10): 1-6