

ABSTRACT

1. Title:

Evaluation of WA Healthy Schools Project: implementation fidelity and maintenance

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3. Key words: Mixed methods, Fidelity, Implementation scores, Health Promoting Schools

4. Abstract Text:

a) Background and aims

The Western Australian Healthy Schools Project (WAHSP) was a complex intervention in which 11 Healthy School Officers (HSOs) supported 268 school communities to establish the Health Promoting Schools Framework (HPSF). The purpose of this paper is to describe research that aimed to evaluate effects of HPSF stages of implementation fidelity on maintenance of health promotion in WAHSP schools.

b) Methods

Four stages of HPSF implementation were defined; Establishment, Implementation, Embedment and Maintenance. HSO questionnaires and project monitoring data were used to assess implementation fidelity and supports at each stage. Scores for each stage were calculated and relationships of these scores with each other, school data and duration of involvement with WAHSP were examined using correlation and cross-tabulation.

c) Results

Very high, significant ($p=0.000$) partial correlations adjusted for duration (11 to 78 months) were found for Establishment fidelity score with Implementation ($r=0.909$) and Embedment scores ($r=0.808$), whilst correlation with Maintenance was weaker ($r=0.693$). Most schools with high Establishment fidelity achieved high Embedment and Maintenance within two to four years, and maintained this after four years. Schools with low Establishment fidelity were unlikely to achieve high Embedment or Maintenance fidelity, even after 4 years. Supports needed for high fidelity varied with each stage of implementation.

d) Conclusion

High fidelity in the Establishment stage of HPSF implementation is critical to maintenance of health promotion in schools. Evaluation based on a staged approach helps to identify critical timing, actions and supports to improve school health promotion implementation.