

Title of Intervention: Group Education for Children with Asthma

Intervention Strategies: Group Education, Individual Education, Supportive Relationships

Purpose of the Intervention: To improve self-management of asthma

Population: Children ages 8-13 with asthma

Setting: Outpatient clinics in the Netherlands; health care facility-based

Partners: None mentioned

Intervention Description:

- **Group Education:** There were ten weekly one-hour sessions with a group of six to eight children under the supervision of two trainers (behavior therapist, child education specialist). Each session had a similar structure to give the children a sense of security. The children could earn rewards that work as reinforcement. The program consisted of three phases. Phase 1 consisted of four sessions and focused on knowledge, correct inhalation technique, attitude, self-efficacy and self-management activities. All learning materials were used as games adapted to the level of concrete operational thinking. Phase 2 consisted of three sessions and focused on the five steps of problem-solving strategies, role-playing, homework, assertive communication and self-management activities. The children received an audiocassette on muscle relaxation they could take home and practice. Phase 3 included four sessions and focused on rehearsal of the problem-solving strategies.
- **Individual Education:** At the end of each session, the children received a homework booklet containing a written summary of what happened during the session, what they had learned and what they should practice during the coming week.
- **Supportive Relationships:** Parents were encouraged to read the booklet with the children and to talk about the advice and the homework.

Theory: Not mentioned

Resources Required:

- **Staff/Volunteers:** Facilitators
- **Training:** Not mentioned
- **Technology:** Equipment to play cassette
- **Space:** Meeting space
- **Budget:** Not mentioned
- **Intervention:** Educational materials, handouts, rewards, audiocassette
- **Evaluation:** Questionnaire

Evaluation:

- **Design:** Randomized controlled trial
- **Methods and Measures:**
 - Parent questionnaires assessed behaviors and asthma management.

Outcomes:

- **Short Term Impact:** One year after training there were significant differences between the intervention and control groups in their ability to manage their asthma. Children in the experimental group were reported to be less anxious during an asthma episode and showed improved ability to cope with their asthma in daily situations. The children in the intervention group were more self-confident and their self-efficacy was greater.
- **Long Term Impact:** Not measured

Maintenance: Not mentioned

Lessons Learned: The training program can reduce the need for medication, school absenteeism and restrictions in daily activities, resulting in better management of asthma both by patients and pediatricians. It could be of preventive value to organize the training program for children with asthma who do not yet have apparent difficulties in managing their asthma.

Citation(s):

Colland VT. Learning to cope with asthma: a behavioural self-management program for children. Patient Educ Couns. Dec 31 1993;22(3):141-152.