The effectiveness and safety of digital interventions for substance use in third-level students
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Illicit substance misuse has increased sharply among third-level students in the last decade. A 2015 survey found that 82% of Irish students had tried illicit substances at least once, highlighting an emerging public health epidemic. Interventions delivered via web or mobile platforms are scalable tools that have the potential to improve healthcare delivery through enhanced effectiveness, efficiency, accessibility, safety and personalisation. Worldwide, a number of digital interventions that aim to reduce harm from substance use have

been developed. However, their safety and effectiveness have yet to be determined. This systematic review aims to determine the safety and effectiveness of digital interventions for substance use in third-level populations.

Academic Search Complete, CINAHL, MEDLINE, PsycARTICLES, Psychology and Behavioural Sciences Collection, PsycINFO, PubMed, Scopus, Science Direct and Cochrane Library were searched in April 2018. Each database was searched using terms under the pillars of: ''mHealth,'' ''drug use'' and ''students''. To be eligible for inclusion, papers must present a measure of effectiveness of the digital intervention. Safety will be assessed by the absence of a negative effect. Authors were contacted to request access for relevant papers and a grey literature search was carried out. The included papers will be critically appraised.

After deduplication, 157 articles were found. Two reviewers screened the articles for relevance and 30 full-text articles were retrieved for review against the inclusion criteria. Preliminary results indicate that none of the reviewed interventions appear to cause harm, and some produced a small reduction in substance use related harm. However, this result appears to be moderated by the behavioural change method used.

The results of this review will contribute to the development of a digital behavioural change intervention aiming to support harm reduction from illicit substance use in a third-level setting.

Key messages:
- Digitally delivered interventions are efficient in reaching large populations such as third-level settings where concentrated populations stretch the capacities of traditional student health services.
- Digital interventions hold great potential for reducing substance use related harms in student populations, but must first be proven safe and effective before further development can take place.