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Effects of interventions to reduce plagiarism in university students: a systematic review

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ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Support - None.

Review Stage at time of this submission - The review has not yet started.

Conflicts of interest - None declared.

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Amendments - This protocol was registered with the International Platform of Registered Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis Protocols (INPLASY) on 25 July 2023 and was last updated on 25 July 2023.

INTRODUCTION

Review question / Objective The aim of this systematic review is to evaluate interventions in terms of efficacy in the reduction of plagiarism in university students. To this end, the proposed the following question: Which are the effects of interventions to reduce plagiarism in university students?

Rationale Multiple studies focused on carrying out interventions to reduce plagiarism in university students allowed Marcusic et al. in 2016 to develop a systematic review (SR), in which the general objective was evaluating interventions to prevent misconduct and promote academic integrity in research and publication. Among the topics, they evaluated studies with different intervention methods to reduce plagiarism in university students and researchers: their conclusions were that practical exercises and the use of text matching software can reduce the occurrence of plagiarism. However, the way of measuring was varied, and the quality of the

studies was low, so further research is considered necessary.

In recent years, the increasing technological advances, and the phenomena due to the COVID-19 pandemic have highlighted the need to review possible changes in school problems, where plagiarism is not an exception. There is evidence, for example, that the transition to emergency remote teaching was associated with an increase in plagiarism detected in assignments delivered during this stage in university students. This has made it necessary to know the effect of interventions aimed at reducing plagiarism, each with their respective adaptations to new events. Based on the reasons mentioned above, combined with the willingness to review studies conducted in languages other than English and in Ibero-American cultures, it is considered that developing a new SR will contribute to refining knowledge about the best strategies to reduce plagiarism in university students.

Condition being studied Plagiarism, in an academic context, is understood as the

appropriation of words or ideas from other authors without giving them due credit, specifically in terms of actions such as false paraphrasing, "copy and paste" or delivering works made by others.

METHODS

Search strategy We will use the new criteria established in the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) of 2020. The general strategy proposed is: (plagiarism OR misconduct OR cheating OR "academic dishonesty") AND (student OR "university students") AND (intervention OR training). However, it is possible that this strategy is modified depending on the database used.

Participant or population This SR will be aimed at university students from any discipline (health sciences, engineering, humanities, etc.) and any university.

Intervention Direct interventions with the aim of reducing plagiarism, among them will be modules of academic integrity, use of Turnitin, instructions on plagiarism, training on paraphrasing, tasks on correct citation, preventive tutorials, warnings on detection of plagiarism for evaluation of activities, among others that consider new remote intervention techniques.

Comparator Groups of university students without intervention about plagiarism.

Study designs to be included In accordance with the hierarchy of evidence, randomized controlled trials and quasi-experimental studies.

Eligibility criteria We will include studies in English, Spanish and Portuguese; where university students is the main population; with direct interventions to reduce plagiarism; compare with groups of students without intervention about plagiarism; that evaluate the effect of the intervention with the aim to measure or an instrument that evaluates attitudes or knowledge in plagiarism. We will exclude studies in graduate students, academics, or researchers; present interventions not related to plagiarism; that do not adequately define plagiarism or when the type of intervention carried out is not specified; do not include comparators; do not report results with objective indicators of plagiarism; do not include a pretreatment assessment; or observational studies.

Information sources Based on the SR topic, it is proposed to search through databases such as Web of Science, Pubmed, Scopus, PsycInfo,

ProQuest, ERIC, Redalyc, Scielo, and TESIUNAM, in addition to reviewing the bibliography of other papers.

Main outcome(s) There is not a standard measure for the purposes of this review, it is expected to find a variety of different outcomes in the reviewed studies. The main results are based on objective indicators (using software or using categories manually performed by judges or the researcher).

Additional outcome(s) As secondary results, we will consider instruments that assess knowledge or attitudes about plagiarism.

Data management The studies will be reviewed independently by two researchers (RAMR and JMSN) considering the inclusion and exclusion criteria. If there is any discrepancy, it will be discussed between the authors and in case of disagreement, a third reviewer (AKRR) will be consulted. For the review process, the Microsoft Excel program will be used to organize the information. Once the list of articles is obtained, duplicates will be eliminated, in addition to reviewing the titles and abstracts to discard articles that are not of interest. Subsequently, the selected articles will be reviewed, and the data will be captured to make a qualitative review. Finally, the possibility of doing a meta-analysis will be evaluated.

Quality assessment / Risk of bias analysis We will consider the Cochran statements and the Grading of Recommendations Assessment, Development and Evaluation system (GRADE).

Strategy of data synthesis We will classify the studies by author, design, characteristics of the population (country, age, sex, race, language, etc.), description of the intervention, comparators, objective indicators of plagiarism and main results.

Subgroup analysis A subgroup analysis will be carried out considering the different strategies of measure or interventions about plagiarism, in such a way that possible variations due to the distinction between evaluation methods are controlled. If the information is enough, subgroup analyzes will be carried out by area, modality (online or face-to-face), sex and age.

Sensitivity analysis A sensitivity analysis will be performed in case the selected studies present some high risk of heterogeneity.

Language restriction English, Spanish and Portuguese.

Country(ies) involved Studies will not be limited by country if they comply with the eligibility criteria.

Keywords Plagiarism; university students; academic integrity; academic dishonesty; misconduct.

Dissemination plans The results of this SR are expected to be published in a peer-reviewed journal.

Contributions of each author

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