



# Protocol: A randomised controlled trial evaluation of Cancer Focus NI's 'Dead Cool' smoking prevention programme in post-primary schools



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## ABSTRACT

This paper presents a research protocol for a randomised controlled efficacy trial of the 'Dead Cool' smoking prevention programme. Dead Cool is a three to four-hour programme designed to be used by teachers with Year 9 students in Northern Ireland. The main outcome of the programme is to prevent students from starting to smoke. The protocol reports a research design intended to test the efficacy of the programme in 20 post-primary school settings. Selected schools included those from secondary /grammar/integrated/single sex/coeducational, rural and urban schools from both the maintained and controlled state sector and independent sector schools. Outcome measures include self-reported behaviours, monitoring of carbon monoxide (CO) in exhaled breath and focus groups designed to assess implementation fidelity and opinions on efficacy in intervention schools and explore the 'counterfactual' potential treatments in control schools.

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## 1. Background

Research suggests that 7% of children aged 11–16 Northern Ireland were smoking in 2010 (Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety Northern Ireland, 2012). Children whose parents, siblings and/or peers smoke are more likely to become smokers themselves (Leonardi-Bee, Jere, & Britton, 2011). It is estimated that around 40% of regular smokers in Great Britain began smoking before age 16 (Office for National Statistics, 2013). Half of all smokers will die prematurely as a result of their smoking (World Health Organization, 2006). Evidence shows that teenagers become quickly addicted to tobacco (DiFranza et al., 2007) and that those who begin to smoke earlier are more likely to be regular smokers in adulthood (Chassin, Presson, Sherman & Edwards, 1990; Taioli & Wynder, 1991).

It is important that tobacco control policies target those most susceptible to becoming lifelong smokers and schools provide an ideal setting for such interventions (Marmot, Allen, & Goldblatt, 2010). While much focus has been given to smoking cessation programmes in the later teens, there is growing evidence that applying interventions underpinned by Planned Behaviour Theory may be helpful in delaying or avoiding smoking initiation (Hassandra et al., 2011).

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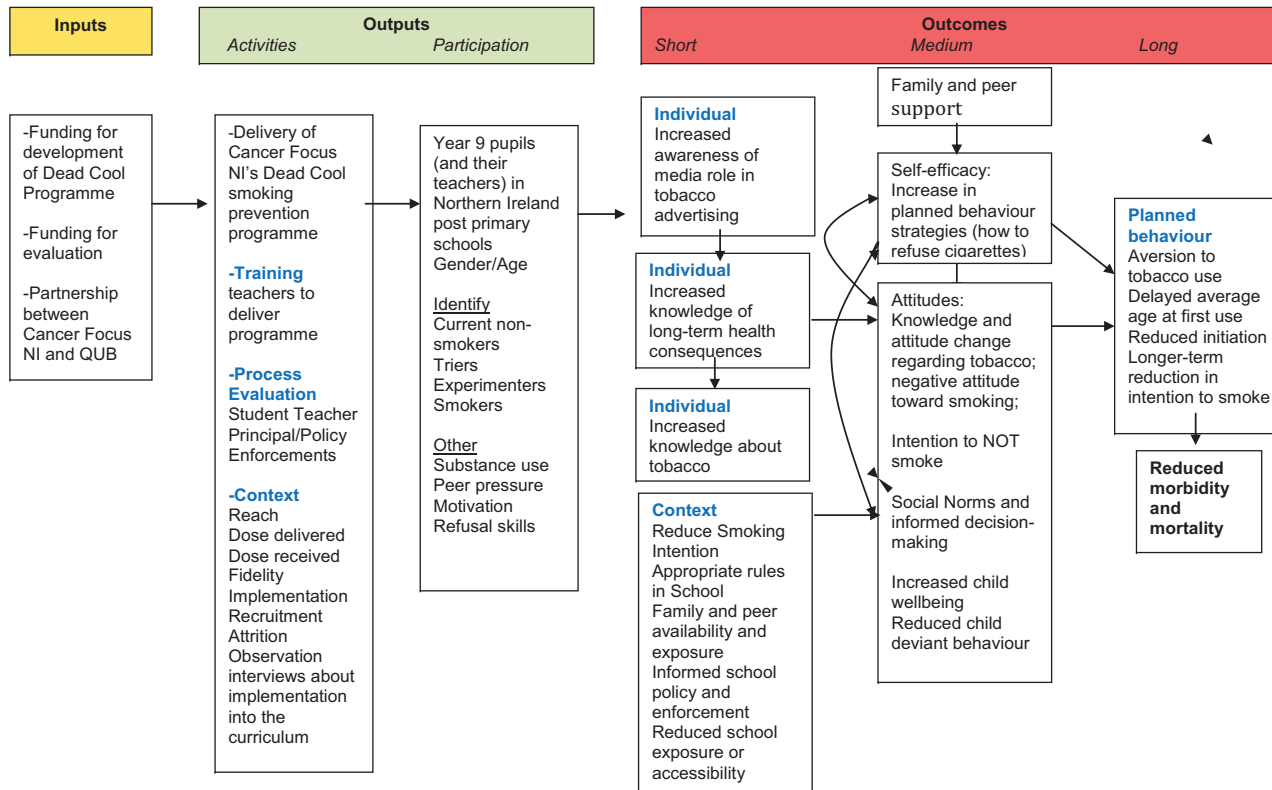


Fig. 1. Dead Cool Logic Model Dead Cool Logic Model.

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