

The CERQual tool for assessing how much confidence to place in the findings of qualitative evidence syntheses



Blending Evidence and Pragmatism: Developing CERQual - an approach for Assessing Confidence in the Evidence from Reviews of Qualitative research

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GRADE CERQual

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Conflict of Interest Statement

JN & AB Convenors CQIMG

JN Co-Chair Cochrane Methods Executive

Member of the Cochrane Methods Application and Review Standards Group

No financial conflicts declared

Receive some expenses to attend meetings
MIF funding (JN) – but not for personal salary

IP declarations:

Member of the core group developing CERQual

Legitimate funding sources:

Employed by Bangor(JN), Sheffield (AB) Universities UK

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The CERQual approach

**Overall aim of the system:
To assess how much confidence we have in the evidence
review finding**

**DISSEMINATION
(OR
PUBLICATION)
BIAS**

?

This is based on an assessment of

**METHODOLOGICAL
LIMITATIONS**
of the individual
studies
contributing to
the review finding

COHERENCE
of the
review finding

RELEVANCE
to the review
question of the
individual
studies
contributing to
the
review finding

**ADEQUACY OF
DATA**
contributing to
the review
finding

Year	CERQual Methodological Development	Funding/Outputs Linked projects
2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr Metin Gulmezogu and the WHO Reproductive Health Dept commissions a suite of reviews to integrate with corresponding effect reviews to inform development of WHO Task Shifting Guidance. WHO Alliance agrees to fund. 	WHO Alliance
2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Methodological questions raised about assessing the confidence in synthesised qualitative findings to feed into the guidance development process • Cochrane MICCI Project commissioned including objectives to explore how to structure QESs and explore methods to appraise included evidence • CERQual core group formed to develop 2 component CERQual – methodological limitations and coherence • Literature searches reveal 1 published approach that was not well developed thinking 	Cochrane MIF MICCI   Norad NKC
2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cochrane Colloquium Auckland – MIF MICCI meeting outlined CERQual idea • CERQual integrated into DECIDE framework and presented to WHO Guideline panel • WHO Taskshifting Guideline published – included 124 recommendations all informed by qualitative review findings and CERQual • First version piloted in 4 reviews • Ongoing programme of CERQual workshops/seminars with key people/organisations begins – feedback into CERQual development 	 WHO OptimizeMNH guidance published with annexes

2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CERQual becomes a subgroup of GRADE Working Group • Lay health worker review published in Cochrane Library – uses 2 component CERQual • Cochrane Colloquium Quebec – CERQual Open meeting • Programme of Coffee CERQuals begin to gain additional feedback • CERQual working group further evolved to include wider range of international stakeholders and methodologists 	 <p>Cochrane QES published with 2 component CERQual Cochrane Editorial published</p>
2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1st CERQual 2 day Working Group and Core Group meeting Barcelona - Second version - 4 component CERQual evolved • Cochrane Colloquium Hydrabad – Open Meeting & Methods Symposium • Facilitated Coffee CERQuals to gain feedback on developing processes • Core Group meeting Oslo • CERQual being used and tested in around 10 reviews • Possible 5th component – dissemination bias -DEQS sub group formed 	

2015

GRADE CERQual

- 2nd CERQual 2 day Working Group Meeting & Core Group; DEQS Meeting, Oslo
- Further refinement of 4 components and development of a 6 paper series
- Facilitated Coffee CERQuals to gain feedback on developing processes
- Developed Dissemination Bias survey in qualitative research
- MIF funding to start developing CAMALOT – CERQual tool to assess methodological limitations
- Website development and launch; Training materials available
- 2nd large WHO guideline published using qualitative findings and CERQual to inform over 100 recommendations on task shifting for abortion care
- First overarching CERQual paper accepted PLOS
- Cochrane Colloquium Vienna - poster, workshop and methods symposium
- Core Group and DEQS meeting London - November



First review using 4 component CERQual published

 Cochrane MIF funding

2nd WHO Guideline published

DEQS international survey

CERQual main paper accepted

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Table 1. Recommended steps for developing a health research reporting guideline.

Step	Item Number	Detail
Initial steps	1	Identify the need for a guideline
	1.1	Develop new guidance
	1.2	Extend existing guidance
	1.3	Implement existing guidance
	2	Review the literature
	2.1	Identify previous relevant guidance
	2.2	Seek relevant evidence on the quality of reporting in published research articles
	2.3	Identify key information related to the potential sources of bias in such studies
	3	Obtain funding for the guideline initiative
Pre-meeting activities	4	Identify participants
	5	Conduct a Delphi exercise
	6	Generate a list of items for consideration at the face-to-face meeting
	7 ^a	Prepare for the face-to-face meeting
	7.1	Decide size and duration of the face-to-face meeting
	7.2	Develop meeting logistics
	7.3	Develop meeting agenda
	7.3.1	Consider presentations on relevant background topics, including summary of evidence
	7.3.2	Plan to share results of Delphi exercise, if done
	7.3.3	Invite session chairs
	7.4	Prepare materials to be sent to participants prior to meeting
7.5	Arrange to record the meeting	
The face-to-face consensus meeting itself	8 ^a	Present and discuss results of pre-meeting activities and relevant evidence
	8.1 ^a	Discuss the rationale for including items in the checklist
	8.2	Discuss the development of a flow diagram
	8.3 ^a	Discuss strategy for producing documents; identify who will be involved in which activities; discuss authorship
	8.4	Discuss knowledge translation strategy
Post-meeting activities	9 ^a	Develop the guidance statement
	9.1	Pilot test the checklist
	10	Develop an explanatory document (E&E)
	11	Develop a publication strategy
	11.1	Consider multiple and simultaneous publications
Post-publication activities	12 ^a	Seek and deal with feedback and criticism
	13 ^a	Encourage guideline endorsement
	14	Support adherence to the guideline
	15	Evaluate the impact of the reporting guidance
	16	Develop Web site
	17	Translate guideline
	18	Update guideline

^aCore items (see text).
doi:10.1371/journal.pmed.1000217.t001

Moher D, Schulz KF, Simera I, Altman DG (2010) Guidance for Developers of Health Research Reporting Guidelines. PLoS Med 7(2): e1000217. doi:10.1371/journal.pmed.1000217

<http://127.0.0.1:8081/plosmedicine/article?id=info:doi/10.1371/journal.pmed.1000217>

CONQUAL	MOHER et al, (2010)	CERQUAL
JB1 (Early 2013)	1. Identify Need for Guidance	WHO Guidance (2011)
<i>Unclear</i>	2. Review the Literature	<i>On Domain-basis (2011-)</i>
<i>Unfunded?</i>	3. Obtain Funding	Nonwegian Knowledge Centre for the Health Services, Human Reproduction Programme (HRP), Alliance for Health Policy and Systems Research.
JB1 only	4. Identify Participants	Cochrane, GRADE, WHO
Scientific Committee 08/13	5. Conduct Delphi	<i>Workshops (2011 – 2013)</i>
Monthly Meetings	6. Generate list of items	Barcelona Pre-Meeting
JB1 Convention 10/13	7. Prepare for Face to Face Meeting	Barcelona (01/2014)
JB1 Convention 10/13	8. Present and Discuss Pre-Meeting Items	Barcelona/GRADE
BMC Med Res Meth 09/14	9. Develop Guidance statement	PLOS Medicine (09/2015)
<i>Unclear</i>	10. Develop Explanatory (E&E) Document	Series of Articles
<i>Unclear</i>	11. Develop Publication Strategy	Available within Team
JB1 Directors 10/13? BMC	12. Seek and Deal with Feedback & Criticism	Oslo Meeting (06/2015)
JB1 Only?	13. Encourage Guideline Endorsement	GRADE & WHO
<i>Unclear</i>	14. Support Adherence to Guideline	Mentors, Coffee CERQuals, Newsletter, Videos
<i>Unclear</i>	15. Evaluate Impact	In Progress
No	16. Develop Web Site	CERQual.org (06/2015)
<i>Unclear</i>	17. Translate and 18. Update	Future!!!!

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Mapping GRADE and CERQual – commonalities/ differences

GRADE certainty of evidence criteria	CERQual concepts
Risk of bias	<i>Methodological limitations</i> of the individual studies contributing to a review finding
Inconsistency	<i>Coherence</i> of the review finding
Indirectness	<i>Relevance</i> to the review question of the individual studies contributing to a review finding
Imprecision	<i>Adequacy of data</i> contributing to a review finding
Publication bias	Further work needed on whether/how to apply concept of publication bias / dissemination effects to qualitative evidence syntheses

Comments or questions?

- To join the GRADE-CERQual Project Group, please send an email to Megan Wainwright: megan@meganwainwright.ca

