

Cochrane Agenda and Priority Setting Methods Group

"Maybe sometimes it's the questions that are biased, not the answers," John Ioannidis

About the Group

Convened: in November 2011 by Mona Nasser, Vivian Welch, Sally Crowe, Sandy Oliver, Alessandro Liberati, Prathap Tharyan and Edward Wilson

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Aim: To inform the Cochrane entities on the empirical evidence available for methods to set research agendas or priorities, in particular (but not limited to) methods to set a research agenda for systematic reviews. In addition to this, the group

- will endeavour to serve as a focus for discussion, connecting people interested in agenda and priority setting methods that are able to share their experiences
- will seek funding to conduct empirical research to build an evidence base for the methodology of research agenda and prioritisation setting. We are looking for collaborators to work with us on proposals in 2012.

Priority setting for systematic review titles:

When? is the best time and at what stage in the research cycle? *See figure 1*

How? what are the best methods and criteria?

What? are we prioritising – views and opinions, population data, capacity of review groups – everything?!

Who? just the CRG or other stakeholders, if so – who?

Why? should there be underpinning principles?

These are the sort of questions that we want to explore ; using existing experience from CRGs and other relevant groups, and the existing literature.



Figure 1*

Agenda setting/priority setting can enter the research cycle at any or all of three points (red arrows): before the new systematic review

What we already understand is that research priority setting processes often have political and social dimensions beyond the clinical and scientific aspects. In order to reflect this wider perspective, we will consider different dimensions of priority setting from the perspectives of context, skills and methods.

What has happened so far?

We have built a website, convened a series of webinars showcasing existing priority setting approaches in CRGs and in the editorial unit, these will be available online soon at

<http://ccnc.cochrane.org/cochrane-canada-live-webinar-archive> .

We are publishing a series of priority setting papers in the Journal of Clinical Evidence in Spring 2012.

What next? Populating the website with priority setting case studies, surveying CRGs for their challenges in priority setting, and a UK workshop in June 2012 to discuss and agree a work programme.

**Adapted from: Wilson, E, and Abrams, K, 2010 Chapter 12: From evidence-based economics to economics-based medicine: using systematic review to inform the design of future research. In: Evidence-Based Decisions and Economics: Health care, social welfare, education and criminal justice. Shemilt, I, Mugford, M, Vale, L, Marsh, K and Donaldson, C. Wiley-Blackwell, Oxford.*

