



**Leading education  
and social research**

Institute of Education  
University of London

# Knowledge, attitudes and skills for setting research priorities

Research Agenda and Priority Setting Methods  
1-2 June 2012, University of Plymouth

Sandy Oliver  
[www.ioe.ac.uk/ssru](http://www.ioe.ac.uk/ssru)



# Outline

- **Good practice for priority setting**
- **Guidance for working together about research**
- **Priority setting as a social activity**
- **Conclusions**

# Good practice in priority setting

# Identifying good practice

- Literature review of priority setting exercises
- Analysis of WHO health research priority setting exercises
- Expert consultation of WHO staff & international research organizations
- **A checklist for health research priority setting: nine common themes of good practice.** *Viergever et al. Health Research Policy and Systems 2010 8:36*

## Preparation; Methods; Afterwards

# Preparation for priority setting

- **Context:** resources, focus, values, environment
- **Comprehensiveness:** structured, detailed, step-by-step guidance
- **Inclusiveness: who and why?**
- **Information gathering:** literature reviews, burden of disease, stakeholder views, prior priority setting exercises
- **Planning translation of priorities into actual research** (via policies and funding): who and how?

# Methods for priority setting

## Select relevant criteria

- **Public health benefit (*should we do it?*):** health burden, likely success, cost-effectiveness, current knowledge
- **Feasibility (*can we do it?*)** sustainability, ethical aspects and local research capacity
- **Cost**

## Select methods for setting priorities

- **Consensus/ metrics** (pooling individual rankings)/ **both**

# After priority setting

## Clear reporting

- **Who set the priorities, and how?**

## Evaluation

- Process evaluation
- Feedback and appeals mechanism
- Review and updating
- Impact analysis



# Other reviews of priority setting

## Conclusions about working together

- Service users involved less often than other stakeholders (Noorani 2007; Stewart 2008)
- **Should** include potential end users, including public, using well constructed questions and procedures (Oxman 2006)
- Group processes **should** ensure full participation by all members of the group (Oxman 2006)

# Guidance for working together (1)

**Table 1** Application of advice for involving (and evaluating) patient membership of panels

	Doing research	Using research
Involving patients in panels	INVOLVE <sup>45</sup> Telford et al <sup>48</sup> Cartwright and Crowe <sup>44</sup> The James Lind Alliance <sup>47</sup> World Health Organization <sup>42</sup>	EULAR <sup>49</sup> Cartwright et al <sup>44</sup>
Assessing patient involvement	Wright et al <sup>43</sup> Telford et al <sup>48</sup>	AGREE II <sup>7*</sup>

**Note:** \*Appraisal of Guidelines for Research and Evaluation (AGREE) II was for assessing the quality of the process and reporting of clinical guideline development.

**Abbreviation:** EULAR, European League Against Rheumatism.

## Guidance for working together (2)

**Table 2** Context for developing advice for involving (and evaluating) patient membership of panels

	<b>National</b>	<b>International</b>
Health condition specific	Wright et al (cancer) <sup>43</sup>	EULAR (arthritis) <sup>49</sup>
Generic health	INVOLVE <sup>45</sup> Cartwright and Crowe <sup>44</sup> The James Lind Alliance <sup>47</sup> Telford et al <sup>48</sup>	AGREE II <sup>7</sup> World Health Organization <sup>42</sup>

**Abbreviations:** AGREE, Appraisal of Guidelines for Research and Evaluation; EULAR, European League Against Rheumatism.

**Table 3 Knowledge base of guidance**

Guidelines	Sources of knowledge
AGREE II <sup>7</sup>	100 clinical guidelines
WHO <sup>42</sup>	WHO staff and international research organizations
EULAR <sup>49</sup>	Systematic review of patient involvement in research; six clinicians in panel of 16 with extensive experience of patient-centered research
James Lind Alliance <sup>47</sup>	Research about patient involvement in research and collaborative working; practical experience of patients, clinicians, and facilitator
Wright et al <sup>43</sup>	Two research units with experience of working with patients
INVOLVE <sup>45</sup>	Service users and researchers committed to service user involvement
Telford et al <sup>48</sup>	Seven service users in panel of 13
Cartwright and Crowe <sup>44</sup>	Two facilitators familiar with relevant research

**Note:** \*(✓) indicates that research knowledge did not explicitly inform guidance.  
**Abbreviations:** AGREE, Appraisal of Guidelines for Research and Evaluation; EUL

# Guidance for working together (4)

## Formalized knowledge

- Formalised by organisations, systematic review or critical appraisal (WHO, AGREE II, Wright et al)

## Tacit knowledge

- Drawn from service users, researchers and facilitators as authors or through Delphi (INVOLVE, Cartwright and Crowe, Telford et al)

## Both

- Accrued collective experience informed by research (James Lind Alliance, EULAR)

Uhm et al. (2012) Patient and public perspectives shaping scientific and medical research: panels for data, discussions and decisions. *Patient Intelligence* 4; 1 – 10

# Guidance for working together (4)

## **Formalized knowledge**

- Guides structures, resources and procedures  
– *useful for funders and hosts*

## **Tacit knowledge**

- Guides interpersonal communication and support  
– *useful for participants and facilitators*

## **Need to share both types of knowledge for**

- Well-organized robust methods for gathering and presenting information appropriately before facilitating deliberation by a mixed group of people

# Research priority setting as a social activity

# What prompts ideas for research?

- **Research knowledge**
- **Clinical practice**
- **Personal experience as patient and carer**
  
- **Collective thinking requires social interaction**



# Social interaction

## Other literatures

- Communicative competence
- Attitudes to knowledge and expertise
- Cross-cultural communication skills
- Group dynamics and facilitation skills

# Communicative competence

## Engaging with the issues

- Strong argument and convincing evidence for decisions
- Using anecdote, drama and emotion to motivate debate<sup>1,2</sup>

## Engaging with each other

- Listening to each other
- Understanding that our own views come from a particular perspective

*Are people learning from each other? What and how?*

<sup>1</sup>Davies, C., Wetherell, M. and Barnett, E Citizens at the centre: deliberative participation in healthcare decisions

<sup>2</sup>Harvey M. Drama, Talk, and Emotion: Omitted Aspects of Public Participation Science, Technology & Human Values  
March 2009 34: 139-161

# Expertise and attitudes

## Types of expertise

- Certified knowledge/ competencies/ experiential knowledge/ problem solving<sup>1</sup>

## Open attitudes

- Appreciate two or more types of expertise<sup>2</sup>

*Who listens well? Who has most influence?*

<sup>1</sup> Blackmore P. Mapping professional expertise: old tensions revisited. *Teacher Development*. 1999;3(1):19–38

<sup>2</sup> Stewart R. *Expertise and Multi-disciplinary Training for Evidence-informed Decision Making*. London: Institute of Education, University of London; 2007.

# Cross-cultural communication

- Awareness of one's own cultural worldview
- Attitude towards cultural differences
- Knowledge of different cultural practices and worldviews
- Cross-cultural skills.

*Do people share a common language, using expressions in the same way?*

# Group dynamics

## Facilitation skills to help people

- Speaking without being suppressed or excluded
- Having equal opportunities to introduce new ideas

# Conclusions

- Guidance is acknowledged internationally for structures and procedures for convening and informing priority setting groups (gathering people and information)
- Guidance is muted for interpersonal interactions for participants and facilitators (attitudes and skills)
- Accruing more sharable knowledge about how to work together requires considerable collective reflection and ‘insider research’

