

Best Review Award Competition 2015

Call for REVIEWS: “Driving the Best Science to Meet Global Health Challenges”; 9th European Congress on Tropical Medicine and International Health 2015.

With the conclusion of the voting period, we are pleased to announce the clear winner of the competition, it is Review 4:

“Exposing Concerns about Vaccination in Low and Middle Income Countries: A Systematic Review”

This review received 112 out of 235 votes.

Congratulations to the authors Daniel Cobos Muñoz, Laura Monzón Llamas and Xavier Bosch-Capblanch! We gladly award the first author with free open access publication of the review and a sum of 2'000 CHF.

The runner-up is review 2:

“Equity in Maternal Health Care Service Utilization: A Systematic Review for Developing Countries”,

it received 49 of the 235 votes. The authors are Zafer Çalışkan, Dilek Kılıç, Selcen Öztürk and Emre Atılğan. We congratulate!

What was the voting procedure?

The registered participants of the 9th ECTMIH Congress, the corresponding authors of the nine Reviews accepted for publication and the 37 reviewers of all submissions to the Call were invited to choose the most interesting Review (based on the abstract), out of the four pre-nominated manuscripts, 235 provided their votes.

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REVIEW 1:

What Research Tells us about Knowledge Transfer Strategies to Improve Public Health in Low-income Countries: A Scoping Review

Abstract

Objective: This study describes the current state of research on knowledge transfer strategies to improve public health in low-income countries, to identify the knowledge gaps on this topic.

Method: In this scoping review, a descriptive and systematic process was used to analyze for each article retained, descriptions of research context and methods, types of knowledge transfer activities and results reported.

Results: 28 articles were analyzed. They dealt with the evaluation of transfer strategies that employed multiple activities, mostly targeting health professionals and women with very young children. Most often these studies used quantitative designs and measurements of instrumental use with some methodological shortcomings. Results were positive and suggested recommendations for improving professional practices, knowledge and health-related behaviours. The review highlights the great diversity of transfer strategies used, some effective and innovative strategies and the many conditions for knowledge use.

Conclusion: The review provides specific elements for understanding the transfer processes in low-income countries and highlights the need for systematic evaluation of the conditions for research results utilization.

Keywords: Scoping review, Public health, Knowledge transfer, Research utilization, Low-income countries

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REVIEW 2:

Equity in Maternal Health Care Service Utilization: A Systematic Review for Developing Countries

Abstract

Objective: To explore progress of equity in the utilization of maternal health care services in developing countries since maternal care is a crucial factor in reducing maternal mortality, which is targeted by the Millennium Development Goal 5.

Methods: A systematic review of quantitative studies. PubMed Central, Web of Science and Science Direct databases were searched for peer-reviewed and English-language articles published between 2005 and 2015.

Results: Thirty-six articles were included in the review. The results reveal the lack of equity in the utilization of maternal health care in developing countries. 33 out of 36 studies find evidence supporting severe inequities while 3 studies find evidence of equity or at least improvement in terms of equity.

Conclusions: Most of the literature devoted to utilization of maternal health care generally provide information on the level of maternal care used and ignore the equity problem. Research in this area should focus not only on the level of maternal care used but also on the most disadvantaged segments of the population in terms of utilization of maternal care in order to reach the set targets.

Keywords: Systematic review, Equity, Maternal care, Health care utilization, Developing countries

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REVIEW 3:

A Systematic Literature Review of the Quality of Evidence for Injury and Rehabilitation Interventions in Humanitarian Crises

Abstract

Objectives: Humanitarian crises continue to pose a significant threat to health; the United Nations estimates that 144 million people are directly affected by conflict or environmental disasters. During most humanitarian crises surgical and rehabilitative interventions remain a priority. This review assessed the quality of evidence that informs injury and physical rehabilitation interventions in humanitarian crises.

Methods: Peer-reviewed and grey literature sources were assessed in a systematic manner. Selected papers were evaluated using quality criteria based on a modified version of the STROBE protocol.

Results: 46 papers met the inclusion criteria. 63% of the papers referred to situations of armed conflict, of which the Yugoslav Wars were the most studied crisis context. 59% of the studies were published since the year 2000. However, only two studies were considered of a high quality.

Conclusion: While there is now a greater emphasis on research in this sector, the volume of evidence remains inadequate given the growing number of humanitarian programmes worldwide. Further research is needed to ensure a greater breadth and depth of understanding of the most appropriate interventions in different settings.

Keywords: Systematic Review, Injury, Rehabilitation, Global surgery, Humanitarianism, Disasters, Conflict

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REVIEW 4:

Exposing Concerns about Vaccination in Low and Middle Income Countries: A Systematic Review

Abstract

Objectives: Concerns about vaccination lead to under- and no-vaccination. Our objective is to expose and synthesize evidence on individuals' and communities' concerns about vaccination to influence current debates on strategies to improve vaccination coverage in low- and middle-income countries.

Methods: Systematic literature review till February 2014, following standard methods. Published and grey literature that focused on individuals and community concerns on childhood vaccinations was selected.

Results: 45 quantitative, qualitative and mixed-methods studies were included. Main reported concerns referred to perceptions of vaccines harms (e.g. attribution of fatal events). Other concerns included programme distrust (mainly due to rumours and conspiracies) and health systems unfriendliness.

Conclusions: Concerns about vaccination are widespread and further worsen the challenges related to programmatic and health systems barriers to vaccination. There is a disconnection between qualitative and quantitative research which misses the opportunity to quantify what is reported in the former. Strikingly, there is a wealth of evidence on concerns but much lesser evidence on interventions to address them. We welcome WHO initiative to tackle vaccine hesitancy and call for the synthesis of evidence and production of guidance on strategies to address concerns on vaccination.

Keywords: Systematic review, Concerns, Hesitancy, Vaccination, Immunization, Low- and middle-income countries
