

2009 International Campbell Collaboration (C2) Colloquium

Submitter Information

Jennifer Francis
Email: jennifer.francis@scie.org.uk

Abstract Information

Abstract Title:

Incorporating economic evaluations into systematic reviews in social welfare

Format:

Paper

Themes:

Developing systematic review methods

Authors:

Jennifer Francis, MA, BSc, Social Care Institute for Excellence

Abstract:

This paper will report on work to develop the capacity to incorporate economic evaluation into systematic reviews. The paper will outline key topics in social welfare where economic evaluation needs further development. It will highlight issues in identifying and classifying economic studies, in deriving 'resource use' data from studies non-economic studies, and in quality appraisal of economic studies. SCIE's methods for knowledge building are based on systematic reviews of the evidence base, drawing on knowledge from users' and carers' accounts, from professionals, from the experiences of organisations of putting policies into practice and from research. This work provides the basis for developing guides for policymakers and practitioners. To date, the work has not attempted to synthesise the messages from economic evaluations of interventions, or to cost the recommendations made in guides. SCIE's recent work on economics has addressed these gaps through work in two broad stages; a) Incorporating economic evaluations into our systematic reviews b) Developing a statement of SCIE's approach to economic evaluation and exploring the feasibility of costing our practice recommendations. This paper focuses on the first stage of the work; incorporating economic evaluations into our knowledge production process, which is now complete. There are significant questions about the availability and quality of economic evaluations that we had to address before SCIE could consider incorporating them into systematic reviews. The systematic assessment of costs and outcomes is far less frequently found in social welfare than in other fields, such as health. There are several possible explanations for this including that the complexity of many social care interventions makes it difficult to carry out a systematic assessment of costs and outcomes. In the context of these issues we worked with colleagues from the University of East Anglia, the Social Science Research Unit, Institute of Education and the Eppi-Centre, and made progress: (i) Developing our capacity for searching for and identifying economic evaluations (ii) Understanding the quality assessment process for economic evaluations and forming a view about which checklists (or sub sets) we will recommend our reviewers to use; (iii) Refining an approach to extracting 'resource use data' from studies which do not constitute full or partial economic evaluations.
