

2009 International Campbell Collaboration (C2) Colloquium

Submitter Information

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Abstract Information

Abstract Title:

Qualitative Meta-Synthesis within Campbell Systematic Reviews: Expanding the best possible evidence base for future policies and programmes

Format:

Paper

Themes:

Session on the different types of evidence that are used to support policy making and practice with a specific focus on qualitative types of evidence.

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Abstract:

The Campbell Collaboration is leading the way in preparing, maintaining, and disseminating systematic reviews in education, crime and justice, and social welfare' (Davies and Boruch, 2001). To date, systematic reviews have largely focused on quantitative research, mostly related to examining the efficacy and effectiveness of specific interventions. Yet, the wealth of information derived from qualitative studies, especially as it relates to participants' preferences, values, local context factors and local experiences is both relevant and important for knowledge generated from systematic reviews. Qualitative research can expand our understanding of the experiences of those involved, define interventions more precisely; provide feedback about the choices of outcome measures; explore the relevance of the research question; and provide interpretations of heterogeneous results (Cooper & Hedges, 1994). In 1998, the Cochrane Qualitative Research Methods Group was established to develop methods for the inclusion of findings from qualitative research. In 2001, the Implementation Process Methods Group was registered with the Campbell Collaboration Steering Group with similar aims: to demonstrate the value of including evidence from qualitative research into systematic reviews; and to develop and disseminate methods for including qualitative research in Cochrane and Campbell reviews. Although these initiatives have made significant progress, there are, as yet, no guidelines for conducting a Campbell Collaboration Systematic Review using qualitative data within existing C2 Protocols. This workshop will build on last year's workshop (Saini & Shlonsky, 2008) that presented a protocol for planning, developing and implementing meta-syntheses of qualitative research within C2's existing protocols and guidelines. The workshop will take participants through the initial steps of a systematic review of Family Group Decision-Making (FGDM) that includes both a quantitative and qualitative studies. The workshop will cover a number of the methodological and practical issues including: 1) the development and implementation of a sensitive search strategy and inclusion process by which relevant qualitative research can be located and screened within the existing systematic search strategy; 2) the use of qualitative studies that are either independent or embedded within other designs; 3) the employment of the revised Quality and Rigor in Qualitative Research Form (Saini, 2008) in order to balance the interpretative nature of qualitative research with the need to review and appraise the studies based on rigor, credibility, and relevance; and 4) strategies for synthesizing and/or summarizing findings to capture context, transferability and potential comparability between qualitative themes and findings from quantitative studies. This workshop will include active participation by audience members by presenting and considering actual review materials, practicing screening and interpretation at several levels, and eliciting a discussion of the benefits and limitations of introducing a qualitative meta-synthesis protocol within Campbell Collaboration's existing protocols and guidelines.
