

Describing a user-informed approach for developing key questions for general practitioner guidelines

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Background

Involving end-users during guideline development improves the likelihood that the guideline will be implemented. Guideline users regularly contribute on guideline development groups but to date there are no established methods for involving end-users during guideline planning (e.g. identifying topics and formulating key questions). Our team is creating a clinical guideline for general practitioners (GPs) on diagnosing and managing work-related mental health conditions. We sought to develop a guideline that addresses the clinical dilemmas encountered by GPs in practice.

Objective

To apply a user-centred approach to develop key questions for a GP guideline.

Method

International best-practice approaches for developing guideline key questions were used to construct an overarching methodology for developing key questions. Steps were integrated into this methodology to enable identification and incorporation of clinical dilemmas, drawing on the Clinical Reasoning Framework, which is the systematic process of clinical judgement utilised by GPs in practice.

Results

A seven-step approach for developing key questions was created. These are: 1) Define the rationale for the guideline; 2a) Identify clinical dilemmas using qualitative interviews with end-users (GPs and other key informants), and extend these findings with a literature review; 2b) Categorise clinical dilemmas using the Clinical Reasoning Framework; 3) Convert clinical dilemmas into key questions; 4) List relevant outcomes for key questions; 5) Refine key questions; 6) Prioritize key questions; and 7) Decide on the final list of key questions.

Conclusions

A user-centred approach, using clinical reasoning, can be adopted by guideline developers to prioritise key questions for GP guidelines.