

A review and synthesis of the knowledge user engagement frameworks to identify essential features: toward building understandings of collaborative research practices

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Background

The ways in which research evidence is produced is important to uptake and use of research results. The engagement of patients, caregivers, clinicians and other healthcare system stakeholders throughout the research process ("knowledge users") leads to co-creation of research evidence that is more patient-centred, useful, and likely to be applied. Conceptualizing knowledge user engagement in health research in an ordered manner is important for communication and evaluation, and should be guided by conceptual models or frameworks.

Objective

To review and synthesize the engagement frameworks to identify essential features of knowledge user engagement in health research.

Method

An international team conducted a review and content analysis synthesis of articles that describe models/frameworks of knowledge user engagement in health research. A focused literature search and evaluation of the Patient Centred Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI) Explorer literature involved 4 steps: 1) determine criteria to identify articles; 2) review obtained articles for their inclusion; 3) abstract data; and 4) assess and synthesize data.

Results

We identify 67 articles that describe models/frameworks of knowledge user engagement in health research. A synthesis of the models/frameworks into a "meta-framework" depicts and explains key concepts and essential features of knowledge user engagement in health research. We identify gaps in the literature and areas for future development to better understand essential features of knowledge user engagement in health research.

Conclusions (if applicable)

Strategies to promote knowledge user engagement in research should be determined in collaboration with knowledge users themselves. Further work to understand features of knowledge user engagement in health research is needed.