The use of rapid review methods in Health Technology Assessments: 3 case studies

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Outline of presentation

• Background to the research programme
• Details of the three reviews
• Checklist of issues to consider
• Where do we go from here?
Background

- National institute for Health Research in UK
- Short reports
- Set commissioning brief
- 8-12 weeks to complete
- Peer reviewed protocols
- Registered on PROSPERO
- Experienced reviewers
Research colleagues

- Katy Cooper
- Abdullah Pandor
- Marrissa Martyn-St James
- Robin Chatters
- Ruth Wong
Review 1: The effectiveness of sexual health interventions for people with severe mental illness

- 13 RCTs
- **Interventions**: strategies to increase knowledge, assess and reduce sexual health risk, change behaviours
- **Comparators**: educational sessions on HIV, money management, substance abuse, health promotion, wait list or no treatment
Review 1: Sexual health interventions

Challenges:

• Wide variation in populations and settings
• Wide range of outcomes
• Large body of non-RCT evidence
• Definition of severe mental illness unclear
Review 1: Sexual health interventions

Approach:

• Brief summary of results presented
• Narrative synthesis
• Grouping of results from included studies by outcome (biological, behavioural and proxy)
• Focused definition of severe mental illness
Review 2: Interventions to treat premature ejaculation

- 102 RCTs (65 from existing reviews and 37 RCT publications)
- **Interventions**: topical anesthetics, anti-depressants, phosphodiesterase-5 inhibitors, opioid analgesics, behavioural therapies, acupuncture, Chinese medicine
- **Comparators**: placebo, waitlist, other therapies
Review 2: Interventions for premature ejaculation

Challenges:

• Very large number of RCTs and existing reviews
• Wide range of interventions including several drug classes and behavioural approaches
Review 2: Interventions for premature ejaculation

Approach:

• Meta-analysis of primary outcome using data from existing reviews adding primary study data

• Narrative synthesis of secondary outcomes
Review 3: Psychological and psychosocial interventions for cannabis cessation in adults

- 33 RCTs (26 in general population and 7 in psychiatric population)
- **Interventions:** cognitive behavioural therapy, motivational interviewing, social support groups, vouchers as incentive
- **Comparators:** waitlist, treatment as usual, written cannabis information, cannabis education
Review 3: Interventions for cannabis cessation

Challenges:

• Wide variation in study populations, interventions and comparators
• Little consistency in outcome measures, time points of measurement and statistics reported
Review 3: Interventions for cannabis cessation

Approach:

- For each intervention/comparison narrative summary of outcomes reported and how many showed a statistically significant effect
- Wide range of populations, interventions and outcomes were included
Checklist of issues to consider

1. Assess the current evidence
2. Consider the most appropriate way to present evidence
3. Ensure clear communication with policy makers
4. Ensure clear reporting of methods
Limitations

- Only 3 reviews all from one research centre
- Chosen methods have potential to introduce bias
- Narrative synthesis methods do not generate quantitative data
- Potential for data errors and synthesis errors using existing reviews
Future research

- More work on issues to consider checklist
- Guidance needed on how to choose most appropriate method
- More exploration of the introduction of bias
- Reporting standards for rapid reviews
Disclaimer

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References


Thank you!

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