

SWAT 73: Effects of feedback method on ranking in an online Delphi study

Objective of this SWAT

To explore how the method of feedback influences ranking of items in an online Delphi study.

Study area: Outcomes

Sample type: Participants

Estimated funding level needed: Moderate

Background

This SWAT will assess the impact of using different groupings to provide aggregate feedback to participants in an online Delphi study. The SWAT investigates how working with all stakeholder feedback aggregated together, within one's own group only or with the knowledge of what responses each group provided influences prioritization and decision-making. A similar assessment was done in the development of a core outcome set in trials of mechanical ventilation in critical care (COVENT).[1] The Delphi participants will be categorized into five stakeholder groups: (a) researchers [health science students, academics, and journal editors]; (b) clinicians [doctors and allied health professionals, medical students]; (c) community [patients, other students and other groups]; (d) industry [medical devices, commercial research, commercial funders, pharmaceutical companies, health media]; and (e) policy [Policy makers, health commissioners, and non-commercial funders].

The first implementation of this SWAT will be in the Protocol Lab for Online Trials-Delphi (PLOT-D) module, which will use an online 3-round Delphi [2] combined with participatory action research [3] to inform the development of a multi-use protocol template for writing protocols for self-recruited online trials of interventional self-management. The Protocol lab will use the Delphi findings, along with earlier research to redesign a series of protocols for online randomized trials with the aim of providing support for citizens to work alongside researchers to build participatory health trials online.[4,5,6]

Interventions and comparators

Intervention 1: Delphi participants to view integrated feedback

Intervention 2: Delphi participants to view their stakeholder group specific feedback only

Intervention 3: Delphi participants to view separate feedback from each stakeholder group

Index Type: Behavioral, Method of presentation

Method for allocating to intervention or comparator

Randomization

Outcome measures

Primary: Differences and similarities in the top five items as ranked by each intervention group for the panel as a whole (i.e. with all stakeholder groups combined)

Secondary: Differences and similarities between the rankings for each stakeholder group within each intervention group

Analysis plans

During each round in the Delphi study, the items will be scored from 1 to 5 by each participant. The proportion of respondents who give each of these five scores will be calculated as a percentage of the total responses. The final responses will be analyzed for each of the three intervention groups across the five stakeholder groups. We will define consensus for item inclusion in the online Delphi study as >70% of responses rating the outcome at 4 or 5 and not more than 15% of responses rating the outcome as 1 or 2.[1] We will explore differences and similarities between the rankings for stakeholder groups within each feedback method. All items will be brought forward to the consensus meeting for consideration and discussion, and for the preparation of a final consensus. There will not be weighting of items or propensity scores to adjust for a non-representative sample, because the goal is to involve all stakeholders and let them decide what is relevant through prioritization of the items over each Delphi round. The scoring will be reported and analyzed by

stakeholder group and again with stakeholder groups combined. The feedback to participants will show absolute numbers and percentages so that prioritization choices will be visible across stakeholder groups, and the perspectives of smaller stakeholder groups can be preserved. The top five disparities and similarities in ranking between stakeholder groups will be identified to report common ground and potential barriers for later problem-solving.

Possible problems in implementing this SWAT

The stakeholder groups might vary in size (and in the proportion who do not provide complete data) making some of the stakeholder-intervention groups too small for a meaningful analysis.

References

1. Blackwood B, Ringrow S, Clarke M, et al. Core Outcomes in Ventilation Trials (COVenT): protocol for a core outcome set using a Delphi survey with a nested randomised trial and observational cohort study. *Trials* 2015;16:368.
2. Sinha IP, Smyth RL, Williamson PR. Using the Delphi technique to determine which outcomes to measure in clinical trials: recommendations for the future based on a systematic review of existing studies. *PLoS Medicine* 2011;8:e1000393.
3. Fletcher AJ, Marchildon GP. Using the Delphi Method for Qualitative, Participatory Action Research in Health Leadership. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 2014;13:1-18.
4. Brice A, Price A, Burls A. Creating a database of internet-based clinical trials to support a public-led research programme: A descriptive analysis. *Digital Health* 2015;1:1-13.
5. Bagley HJ, Short H, Harman NL, et al. A patient and public involvement (PPI) toolkit for meaningful and flexible involvement in clinical trials – a work in progress. *Research Involvement and Engagement* 2016;2:15.
6. Price A, Albarqouni L, Kirkpatrick J, et al. Patient and public involvement in the design of clinical trials: An overview of systematic reviews. *Journal of Evaluation in Clinical Practice* 2018;24:240–53.

Publications or presentations of this SWAT design

Examples of the implementation of this SWAT

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Revisions made by:

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