Advancing Our Profession: Driving Leadership and Best Practices in Medical Communications
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Consensus-based methods in biomedical research and clinical practice: The ACCORD study protocol for establishing a reporting guideline

Tuesday 25th January 2022, 15.15-15.35
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Learning objectives</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Recognize the value of well-conducted and reported consensus publications</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Understand that methods of differing rigor exist for reaching consensus</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Understand the process for developing reporting guidelines</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Raise awareness that guidance is being established for reporting consensus publications</td>
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The hierarchy of evidence pyramid

Systematic reviews & meta-analyses of RCTs

- RCTs
- Cohort studies
- Case-control studies
- Cross-sectional studies
- Case reports & case studies
- Expert opinion

RCTs: randomized controlled trials
Consensus methods can harness expert knowledge to support decision making in areas of uncertainty

- Rapidly evolving environment
- Rare disease or clinical heterogeneity
- Lack of/conflicting data

Absence of high-quality evidence
Examples where consensus methodology is used

## Methods used to develop consensus-based publications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Structured interaction</th>
<th>Face-to-face</th>
<th>Anonymous decisions</th>
<th>Formal feedback</th>
<th>Pros</th>
<th>Cons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Informal meeting</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Speed, simplicity</td>
<td>All voices may not be equal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delphi technique</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Rigour, transparency</td>
<td>Complex; definition of consensus varies</td>
</tr>
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</table>

...and everything in between

Other methods include: Nominal Group Technique (NGT); RAND (NGT version); Staticised Group Method
As with all studies, conduct and reporting are key

| “In some cases, the modifications to Delphi are meaningful and contribute to a better understanding of the technique, while in others they are random and arbitrary” 1 |
| “One final solution would be to phase out the use of the term ‘Delphi research’ ...authors would be obliged to transparently describe the methods that they used without hiding behind the apparent strength of the title ‘Delphi research’ ” 2 |
| “We believe there is a need to improve the reporting on Delphi studies, along the lines of a CONSORT-like guideline, as is used for randomized controlled trials.” 3 |
| “…undisclosed analytic flexibility makes it unacceptably easy to data mine for and selectively report consensus.” 4 |

Key role of ISMPP in the genesis of the ACCORD guidelines
Role of EQUATOR in supporting reporting guidelines

EQUATOR is an international network that seeks to improve the reliability and value of published health research literature by promoting transparent and accurate reporting and wider use of robust reporting guidelines.

EQUATOR toolkit for developing reporting guidelines

1. Identify the need for a reporting guideline
2. Literature review, registration, and funding
3. Develop the guideline
4. Write up and publish the guideline
5. Disseminate the guideline
6. Update the guideline

How to develop a reporting guideline. Available at: https://www.equator-network.org/toolkits/developing-a-reporting-guideline/ [Accessed January 2022]
The process for developing the ACCORD guideline

We are here

May-July 2022
Ongoing
TBC!

We are here
The Steering Committee has a wide range of experience

- Clinician practitioners
- Methodologists
- Publication professionals
- Patient representative
- Publishing industry
- Pharmaceutical industry

Thanks to:
Bernd W. M. Arents, VMCE
Sree Pillai, Luke Worley, Ogilvy Health
Helen Bremner, Rebecca Hornby, Oxford PharmaGenesis
Zbys Fedorowicz, University of Sao Paolo
A clear need was identified

A search of the EQUATOR network website\(^1\) for “consensus” identified:

- The CREDES statement (2017), providing recommendations for the reporting of Delphi consensus in palliative care specifically\(^2\)
- A protocol for development of a preferred items checklist for reporting e-Delphi studies (REDS) was registered in 2016\(^3\) but has not been published*  

• PubMed search on 1 July 2021 for “reporting guidelines” AND “Delphi” found no published guidelines
• The need for reporting guidelines has been identified in systematic reviews\(^4\) and by publication professionals\(^5\)

\(^*\)REDS organisers subsequently invited to ACCORD Delphi panel

1. https://www.equator-network.org/  

All URLs accessed January 2022.
The objective of ACCORD

To systematically develop a reporting guideline to help the biomedical research and clinical practice community describe the methods used to reach consensus in a complete, transparent, and consistent manner
Writing up, registering and submitting the protocol


Creating online channels

The final checklist and related publications will be archived at https://accordstatement.wordpress.com/
Literature research ongoing

- Systematic review process is informed by and will be reported according to PRISMA guidelines
- Search strategy developed covering multiple databases: Web of Science (core collection), MEDLINE (Web of Science), PubMed, MEDLINE (OVID), Embase (OVID), Cochrane Library, Emcare (OVID), Academic Search Premier, and PsycInfo
- Identifying research assessing the quality of reporting of consensus recommendations in biomedicine
- Ineligible studies will include individual reporting guidelines or treatment guidelines
- Screening of search results and analysis of the findings is underway
  - Preliminary results are that 2736 references were identified; review and adjudication of references for relevance is ongoing
Join us!

• What we need:
  • Qualified individuals to join a Delphi panel to validate the draft ACCORD reporting guideline in March/April
  • Time commitment ~8 hours over ~2 months
• Qualified individuals include:
  • Those who support, design, and report consensus research (methodologists, clinicians, publication professionals, pharmaceutical industry representatives)
  • Those who publish, use, or are affected by consensus research (journal editors, clinicians, patients)
• To nominate yourself or another individual, please contact ACCORD@ogilvy.com
Thank you for your attention!