

Balancing Rigour with Speed: PaCERS Rapid Review Methodology

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Abstract

Background

The spread of COVID-19 has shown the importance of producing evidence in a timely manner. The research community along with librarians have been eager to contribute to the evidence base. However, balancing rigour with speed has become a challenge. The Palliative Care Evidence Review Service (PaCERS) was established to support professionals and other decision makers working in palliative care in producing rapid evidence summaries on questions of current and direct importance to clinical care or service delivery.

Objectives

To describe the development of the PaCERS methodology, a service which is responsive to urgent, clinically driven, calls for evidence in response to service redesign opportunities or need for changes to clinical care.

Methods

We have developed a rapid review methodology using modified systematic review methods to identify, appraise and produce evidence in a timely manner. We have additionally held a stakeholder workshop to further refine our methodology and reporting processes and achieve consensus on how best PaCERS can serve the palliative care community in conducting rapid reviews. An overview of our process is outlined in Figure 1.

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Results

To date we have produced eleven rapid reviews requested by clinicians or decision makers working in palliative care. Each stage of the methodology will be highlighted and will include an example of a rapid review undertaken to inform service delivery during COVID.

Conclusion

Rapid reviews have vast methodological variation. However, they are an important tool for evidence-informed decision making especially when time, resource constraints, and rapidly changing health needs prevail. The PaCERS approach could be adapted to suit partnerships between researchers working with librarians in all healthcare disciplines.

Keywords : Evidence, Systematic Review, Rapid Review, Research, Partnerships

