SWAT 72: Effects of question section order on prioritization of items by stakeholder groups in an online Delphi study

Objective of this SWAT
To explore the effects of question section order on prioritization of items by stakeholder groups in an online Delphi study.

Study area: Outcomes
Sample type: Participants
Estimated funding level needed: Moderate

Background
This SWAT will be nested as a randomized trial within an online Delphi study. It will assess the impact of presenting the participants with the question sections in different orders. A similar assessment has been done during the development of a core outcome for critical care trials set with a nested study examining the impact of question order on prioritization of outcomes.[1] Research has shown that different stakeholders groups may differ in how they value or prioritize research questions [2] and outcomes [3] and it is recommended that each group should be adequately represented. Therefore, in this SWAT, 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]; (d) 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), which will use an online multi-round Delphi [4] combined with participatory action research [5] 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.[6,7,8] Participants will be randomized to receive a version of the Delphi with public and patient involvement (PPI) items first followed by protocol statements, or protocol statements first followed by PPI items. The order of the items within each section will not be randomized because pilot testers reported that doing so separated them from the logical order of the questions and introduced confusion. For the Delphi study, the final consensus will be informed by combining responses for both randomization groups.

Interventions and comparators
Intervention 1: Delphi participants to view publiz and patient involvement (PPI) statements first
Intervention 2: Delphi participants to view protocol statements first

Index Type: Behavioral, Method of presentation

Method for allocating to intervention or comparator
Randomization

Outcome measures
Primary: Delphi response rates
Participants' responses (context effects), including differences among stakeholder groups
Retention of items at the end of the first Delphi round.
Secondary:

Analysis plans
The Mann–Whitney U test will be used to analyse the values between the randomized groups for each consensus decision. This is a nonparametric test of the null hypothesis that it is equally likely that a randomly selected value from one sample will be less than or greater than a randomly selected value from a second sample.

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. This might be mediated by selecting a randomized sample from each to match the smallest stakeholder group and presenting this for comparison with the main analysis.

References
1. Brookes ST, Chalmers KA, Avery KNL, et al. Impact of question order on prioritisation of outcomes in the development of a core outcome set: A randomised controlled trial. Trials 2018;19:1–11.
2. Potter S, Brookes ST, Holcombe C, et al. Exploring methods for the selection and integration of stakeholder views in the development of core outcome sets: a case study in reconstructive breast surgery. Trials 2016;17:463.
3. Snow R, Crocker JC, Crowe S. Missed opportunities for impact in patient and carer involvement: a mixed methods case study of research priority setting. Research Involvement and Engagement 2015;1(1):7
4. 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.
5. 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.
6. 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.
7. 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.
8. 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

People to show as the source of this idea: Amy Price
Contact email address: dr.amyprice@gmail.com
Date of idea: 5/MAR/2018
Revisions made by:
Date of revisions: