Rapid Qualitative Reviews

A SCOPING REVIEW OF EXISTING GUIDANCE AND PUBLISHED EXAMPLES

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Disclosure

Laura Weeks, David Kaunelis, and Andrea Smith work at CADTH

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- Application fees for three programs:
  - CADTH Common Drug Review (CDR)
  - CADTH pan-Canadian Oncology Drug Review (pCODR)
  - CADTH Scientific Advice

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Andrew Booth is a Co-Convenor of the Cochrane Qualitative and Implementation Methods Group

Both Fiona and Andrew teach on Rapid Review and Qualitative Synthesis short courses that generate income for ScHARR at the University of Sheffield.
Qualitative evidence is being used in decision making
Getting evidence to decision makers

- *Tight* timelines
- Use systematic review methods

- **Searching**
- **Selecting**
- **Data extraction**
- **Critical appraisal**
- **Synthesis**
Rapid Qualitative Reviews?

Initial impressions:
• Pleased to see increased requests for qualitative evidence to support decision-making
• Draw on rapid synthesis methods and principles

Short term impressions:
• Discomfort with methodological short cuts
• Discomfort with final product
How should qualitative evidence synthesis be done rapidly?

1. Identify existing methodological guidance for the conduct of rapid qualitative evidence syntheses

2. Identify rapid qualitative evidence syntheses and describe the methods used
Methods – scoping review

- Peer reviewed published literature & grey literature
- Independent duplicate screening and selecting
- Data extraction Descriptions of methods used (SALSA)
- Analysis Mapping methods and guidance
Literature Search

- MEDLINE, CINAHL, Google Scholar, PROSPERO
- Grey literature: grey matters
- Email to networks
- Citation searches in ISI Web of Knowledge

Eligibility criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Methodological papers</th>
<th>Example rapid reviews</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Include</td>
<td>Describe methods or guidance for the rapid synthesis of primary qualitative studies</td>
<td>Published or grey literature with evidence of systematicity and self-described as rapid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exclude</td>
<td>Not rapid, not health related, not exclusively qualitative</td>
<td>Not rapid, not health related, not exclusively qualitative</td>
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Data Extraction

- Descriptive data
  - e.g., author name, objectives, publication date
- Methodological papers:
  - Details of guidance (SALSA framework)
- Examples:
  - Rapid methods, motivations
- Single reviewer, with verification by second reviewer
- Contact with study authors to verify and add detail

Data Analysis

- Descriptive analysis of characteristics of eligible papers
Results – Guidance documents

- No guidance documents specific to rapid qualitative reviews
- Mentions of qualitative reviews, largely treated as similar with some notable exceptions
Results

- 14 examples of published rapid qualitative reviews
  - Study reports (n=11), protocols (n=3)
  - Journal publications (n=3)
  - Grey literature (n=8)
    - CADTH (n=7), Sax Institute (n=1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Publication Year</th>
<th>Country of Origin</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2017 (n=8)</td>
<td>Canada (CADTH) (n=7)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2016 (n=3)</td>
<td>United Kingdom (n=5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015 (n=2)</td>
<td>United States (n=1)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2010 (n=1)</td>
<td>Australia (n=1)</td>
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Rapid Qualitative Reviews – Are they Publication Worthy?

- Journal perspectives?
- Researcher perspectives?
- Customer driven?
- Supplemental work needed?
- Poor methodological reporting?
What Research Questions are Asked?

• Patients’ experiences and perspectives receiving health care or living with a health condition (n=7)
• Patients’, family members’ and caregivers’ experiences and perspectives (n=4)
• Outcomes of importance to patients (n=2)
• Health seeking behaviours (n=1)
• Expectations for health care services (n=1)
• Barriers and facilitators to health care (n=1)
What short cuts?

- Searching
- Selecting
- Data extraction
- Critical appraisal
- Synthesis
Literature search short cuts

- Searching
- Selecting
- Data extraction
- Critical appraisal
- Synthesis
Literature search short cuts

- Use of limits
  - Time (e.g., past 5 years, past 10 years) (n=4)
  - Sources (e.g., limited databases, no grey literature, no hand searching) (n=4)
  - Language (i.e., English only) (n=4)
  - Country (i.e., UK only) (n=1)
- Highly focused searches (n=2)
- No short cuts (n=2)
- NR (n=2)
Study selection and data extraction short cuts

- Searching
- Selecting
- Data extraction
- Quality appraisal
- Synthesis
Study selection and data extraction short cuts

- Single (non-duplicate) screening and selection (n=11)
- None (n=1)
- NR (n=2)
Study selection and data extraction short cuts

- Single (non-duplicate) data extractions (n=11)
- If an article is considered relevant, but data are insufficient or not available, the article was excluded (n=1)
- NR (n=2)
Critical appraisal short cuts

Searching
Selecting
Data extraction
Critical appraisal
Synthesis
Critical appraisal short cuts

- Single reviewer (n=8)
- Single reviewer with verification on a sample (n=2)
- Short tool, standard prompts (n=10)
- Did not conduct (n=2)
Synthesis short cuts

- Searching
- Selecting
- Data extraction
- Critical appraisal
- Synthesis
Synthesis short cuts

- Use deductive framework to extract and analyze data (n=2)
- Limited reviewers involved in analysis (n=11)
- NR (n=3)
Summary – Synthesis Short Cuts

• Not unlike rapid clinical reviews
  • Search limits
  • Single reviewer
    • Screening
    • Data extraction
    • Critical appraisal
    • Data analysis
Should qualitative reviews be done quickly?

“What an odd project this is… at least from my perspective as someone who teaches students that qualitative research should reach for levels of depth and that these can only occur when fully emerged into the data and fully exposed to data (in the sense of prolonged exposure to be able to see the patterns more clearly and verify them against the data). I wondered, what is it that you have in mind as the end goal of a rapid QES? Who does it serve and why would we engage in a (potential surface scratching) rapid type of QES? “
Keeping rapid qualitative reviews ‘qualitative’

• How do (can) we retain the iterative, inductive character of qualitative research?

• What are the policy-relevant limits of rapid qualitative reviews?

• Be explicit and transparent about methodological choices and limitations
ScHARR
PRISMA – published literature only

Records identified through database searching (n = 1891)

Additional records identified through other sources (n = ongoing)

Records after duplicates removed (n = 1891)

Records screened (n = 134)

Full-text articles excluded, with reasons (n = 10, not exclusively qualitative, n=1, not rapid)

Full-text articles assessed for eligibility (n = 12)

Studies included in the analysis (n = 1)