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Focusing the question

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Sheffield 2010



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Aims for this session

- Overview of question types in qualitative systematic reviewing
- Formulating a qualitative question: a worked example
- Over to you!



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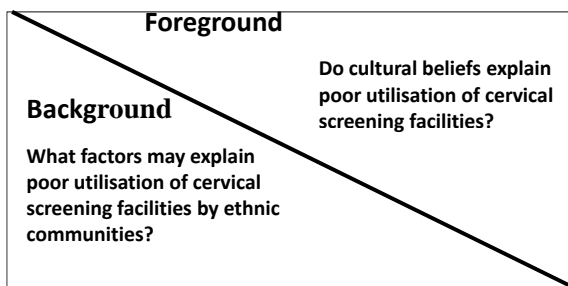
Importance of a focused question

- “The review question should specify the types of **p**opulation (participants), types of **i**nterventions (and **c**omparisons), and the types of **o**utcomes that are of interest... These components of the question, with the additional specification of types of **s**tudy that will be included, form the basis of the pre-specified eligibility criteria for the review”. (Cochrane Handbook)

Different types of qualitative questions

- What is the aim of the question?
 - Background question: to inform development of a quantitative effectiveness protocol
 - Informing or supplementing question: To help explain the findings of an effectiveness review by
 - using qualitative data from included trials and/or
 - identifying qualitative studies (sibling studies) alongside included trials and/or
 - Identifying qualitative studies that explore the intervention
 - To enhance an effectiveness review by
 - Finding qualitative studies that enable conceptual analysis of issues raised about the topic

Background and foreground questions



Source: McKibbin A, Hunt D, Richardson WS et al. Finding the evidence. In: User's guide to the medical literature. 2002; 13-15

Using background questions in protocol development

- What factors may explain poor utilisation of cervical screening facilities by ethnic communities?
 - Produces a list of factors for example
 - Socioeconomic group
 - Level of education
 - Ethnicity
 - Prior screening experiences
 - These factors may be taken into account in terms of formulating the PICO for the effectiveness review



Informing development of the PICO for an effectiveness review protocol

- P: Women aged 45 or over
- I: Written invitation to cervical screening
- C: Written invitation plus follow up reminder
- O: Attendance at screening

Do these factors, identified from a qualitative background search, affect the formulation of the question?

- Socioeconomic group
- Level of education
- Ethnicity
- Prior screening experiences



Informing questions

- P: Do women aged 45 or over perceive
- I: A written invitation to cervical screening as more or less appropriate than
- C: A written invitation plus follow up reminder
- O: In terms of influencing their decision to attend for screening
- Qualitative data from randomised trials explores acceptability of written invitations
- A qualitative study of patient satisfaction with the cervical screening service is conducted alongside the trial
- Qualitative studies exploring patient satisfaction with cervical screening are located for the similar populations (P), interventions (I)



A structure for formulated questions

Cochrane Reviews use **PATIENT-INTERVENTION-COMPARISON-OUTCOME** (PICO) structure

Within qualitative evidence syntheses the following may be more appropriate:

- SETTING**
- PERSPECTIVE**
- INTERVENTION/INTEREST**
- COMPARISON**
- EVALUATION**

Let us consider SPICE

S	Setting – Where? In what context?
P	Perspective – For who?
I	Intervention (Phenomenon of <i>Interest</i>) – What?
C	Comparison – What else?
E	Evaluation – How well? What result?

Enhancing questions

- Issues raised in the randomised controlled trials may include
 - Low uptake of screening that appears to be related to ethnic group and level of education
- Qualitative questions may be formulated to explore these questions
- What would your questions be?

What is qualitative research?

- Methods that explore experiences, perceptions, views
- A research process that uses a qualitative method of data collection and a qualitative method of analysis
- Thinking feeling describing – not measured
- The product is common themes and concepts that help to interpret and understand phenomenon - explanatory



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Summary

- An open ended, exploratory Background Question can provide:
 - Clarity on the Scope of the Question for an effectiveness review protocol
 - Criterion for developing Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria
 - Starting point for Development of Search Strategy
- Informing questions are
 - Usually closely aligned to the PICO for an effectiveness review
 - Aim to identify qualitative research that was conducted alongside RCTs or is closely related to the PICO for the RCTs included in the review
- Enhancing questions are
 - open questions that explore specific issues that arise from or may be relevant to the included studies in an effectiveness review.
 - hey help to explain effects/results of the effectiveness review.
