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Issues and challenges to scoping and focusing the question

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Session aims

- To identify the issues and challenges in formulating different types of qualitative questions for evidence synthesis



Let's use an example to explore question formulation issues

- Read the summary handout of Lewin et al (2010)
- What are the components of the lay health worker intervention?
- Consider the issues that were identified by the authors of the review
- Could some of these issues be clarified by searching for qualitative research evidence?
- Select an issue and formulate a qualitative question



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Issues raised from questions that inform aggregative reviews

- There may be 'essential ingredients' that need to be included in interventions
 - For example, the search on back pain education identified an issue with appropriateness and relevance of information
- Informing questions need to produce convincing evidence about these ingredients to justify changing an effectiveness question.
- How much evidence is needed to change the original effectiveness question?



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Issues raised when considering whether to do an interpretive synthesis

- Utility
- Relevance
- Timeliness
- Explanatory value



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Is it worth it? The TRUE test

- **Timely:** Will the question still be relevant when the review is finally completed? Is the information perceived to be critical to using the results of the effectiveness review?
- **Relevant:** How will this question contribute information that is relevant to health services policymakers? That is relevant to protocol development or updating of a review?
- **Useful:** Did the scoping process specifically note issues that could be informed by qualitative research? Which of (the many) findings from the qualitative scoping will be useful in focusing the review and/or explaining the results? Will the QES explain a cross cutting phenomena?
- **Explanatory value:** Does the synthesis contribute to explaining the outcomes of effectiveness studies and/or the broader context that influences effectiveness?



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Further challenges

- Team skills
- Team coordination
- Informed and transparent decisions about when and how to use QES/ER data