

Describing a user-centred approach to develop key questions for a clinical guideline for general practitioners

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BACKGROUND

- A national clinical guideline to assist general practitioners (GPs) with the diagnosis and management of work-related mental health conditions is being developed in Australia.
- Involving end-users in guideline development helps implementation. [1] Taking into consideration the needs of users and contextual factors that might influence implementation heightens the chance that the guideline will be adopted into practice. [2]
- Guideline development manuals do not provide advice on how to identify the challenges faced by clinicians in practice that guidelines should address.

OBJECTIVE

To create a clinician-centred approach to the development of key clinical questions for the new work-related mental health guideline.

METHODS

Phase one: identifying current best practice in formulating key clinical questions for guidelines

- An electronic search was undertaken of major national and international guideline development groups in Australia, the US, Canada, the UK and Europe.

Phase two: Identifying clinical challenges and incorporating these into the development of key clinical questions for guidelines

- A review of theoretical frameworks was undertaken to identify a framework that might be suitable to organise clinical challenges.
- A group consensus approach was used to select the possible steps to identify clinical challenges.

RESULTS

Phase one: identifying current best practice in formulating guideline key questions

- 12 guideline development protocols were reviewed by the project team for approaches to prioritising guideline questions or defining the guideline scope.
- We selected the two most comprehensive protocols to utilise in our guideline development process (the NICE [3] and WHO [4] protocols).
- An initial seven-step approach was identified as current best practice in developing guideline key clinical questions (Table 1).

Table 1. Current best practice for developing guideline key clinical questions

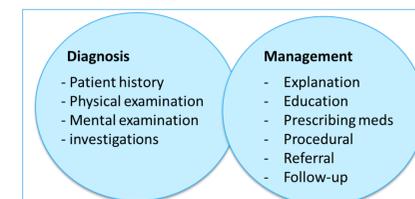
Steps for developing key clinical questions
Step 1: Define the rationale for the guideline
Step 2: Generate an initial list of key questions based on clinical challenges expressed by stakeholders
Step 3: Convert initial list of questions into <u>P</u> opulation, <u>I</u> ntervention, <u>C</u> omparator <u>O</u> utcome format
Step 4: Specify all relevant outcomes for each question
Step 5: Review and revise draft key questions
Step 6: Rate outcomes in order of importance
Step 7: Decide on final list of questions

Phase two: Identifying clinical challenges and incorporating these into the development of key clinical questions for guidelines

- A qualitative research component was integrated at Step 2 of the current best practice approach for developing guideline key questions.

- The Clinical Reasoning Framework (Figure 1) can be used to guide the development of the interview questions and the analysis of the findings.

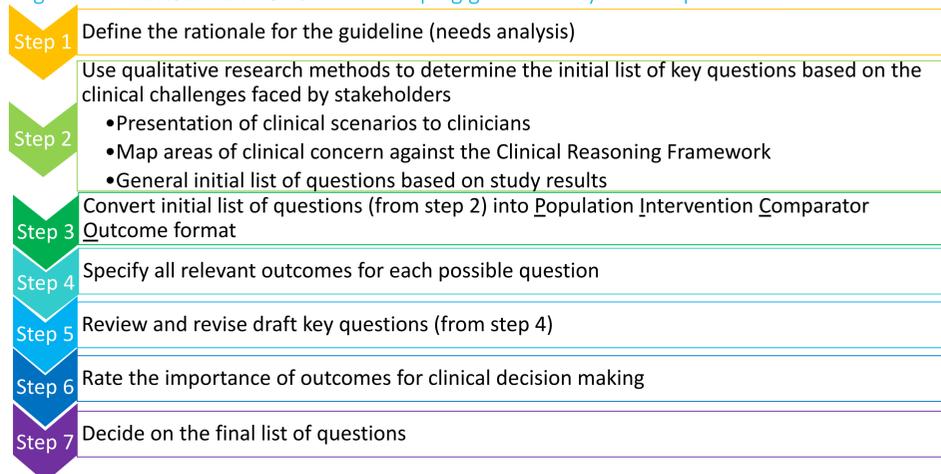
Figure 1. Key phases of the Clinical Reasoning Framework, defined as-“the disciplined, analytical, scientific approach that integrates all the relevant information in the search for the best approach to diagnosis and therapy”. [5]



OUTCOME

A clinician-centered approach for the development of guideline key questions is described in Figure 2.

Figure 2. A REVISED APPROACH to developing guideline key clinical questions



The clinician-centered approach was applied by the project Guideline Development Group and ten key clinical questions were developed for inclusion in the guideline (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Key clinical questions identified using this approach

Assessment and diagnosis
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Diagnosing a mental health condition and assessing its severity<ul style="list-style-type: none">• In workers presenting with symptoms of mental health conditions, what tools can assist a GP to make an accurate (sensitive and specific) diagnosis of a mental health disorder and its severity?• Assessing the work-relatedness of a mental health condition<ul style="list-style-type: none">• In patients with a diagnosed mental health condition, what methods are effective at indicating the probability that the diagnosed mental health condition has arisen as a result of work?• Detecting a developing comorbid mental health condition<ul style="list-style-type: none">• In workers, what factors assist in the early detection of a comorbid work-related mental health condition?
Management
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Managing work-related mental health conditions<ul style="list-style-type: none">• In patients with a mental health condition, what GP strategies result in the highest level of personal recovery and/or return to work?• In patients with a diagnosis of a work-related mental health condition what factors adversely affect progress in the patient's condition?• In patients with work-related mental health conditions who are not improving, what strategies should a GP undertake to improve the patient's condition (e.g. identify recurrent/continuing stressors, new symptoms/signs, new comorbidities such as drug & alcohol use?)• In patients with work-related mental health conditions, what interventions are effective at managing comorbid substance misuse and addictive disorders by GPs?• Managing patient understanding and expectations<ul style="list-style-type: none">• When conveying a diagnosis of a work-related mental health condition to a patient, what factors should GPs consider, to ensure that their diagnosis is understood and acknowledged by the patient?• Determining whether a patient has capacity to return to work<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is appropriate communication with the patient's workplace, in order to appropriately manage a work-related mental health condition?• In workers with a mental health condition, what information should a GP consider to determine whether a person has capacity to return to work?

CONCLUSIONS

- An improved approach to the development of key clinical questions for guideline developers is described here.
- This approach can be used to support the development of other clinical practice guidelines.
- Consideration should be given to the additional resource and time requirements.
- Research is needed to determine if this clinician-centred approach addresses clinical challenges, and if this results in increased implementation of guideline recommendations in practice.

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