

# Does knowledge brokering improve the quality of rapid review proposals? A before and after study

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## Introduction

### Why are rapid reviews needed?

Policy makers want to use research in policymaking, but report barriers including:

- Poor access to good quality, relevant research
- A lack of timely research output
- A lack of syntheses and summaries of research
- Research that is difficult to understand.

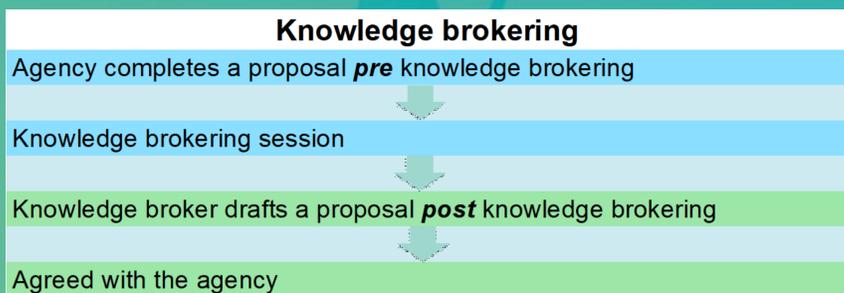
### How do rapid reviews overcome these barriers?

Rapid reviews address these barriers by:

- Providing syntheses and summaries of existing research
- Answering questions that are relevant to policymakers
- Conducting research reviews in short timeframes
- Reporting findings in plain English.

### Knowledge brokering and the Evidence Check program

In Evidence Check, policymakers draft a review proposal (a *pre* knowledge brokering proposal) and have a 1-hour session with a knowledge broker, who re-drafts a review proposal based on the discussion (a *post* knowledge brokering proposal).



## Aim

To determine whether knowledge brokering increases the perceived clarity of review proposals from the perspective of potential reviewers and increases reviewers' confidence that they can meet policymakers' needs based on the information in the proposal.

## Methods

30 reviewers who had previously undertaken Evidence Check reviews examined the quality of 60 *pre* and 60 *post* knowledge brokering proposals. Each reviewer was allocated two *pre* and two *post* knowledge brokering proposals, randomly ordered, from the 60 reviews, ensuring no reviewer received a *pre* and *post* knowledge brokering proposal from the same review. The reviewers were blind to whether the review proposals they received were *pre* or *post* knowledge brokering. Using a six point Likert scale the reviewers scored five questions examining clarity of information about the review proposal's:

1. Purpose
2. Review question
3. Scope
4. Method
5. Format.

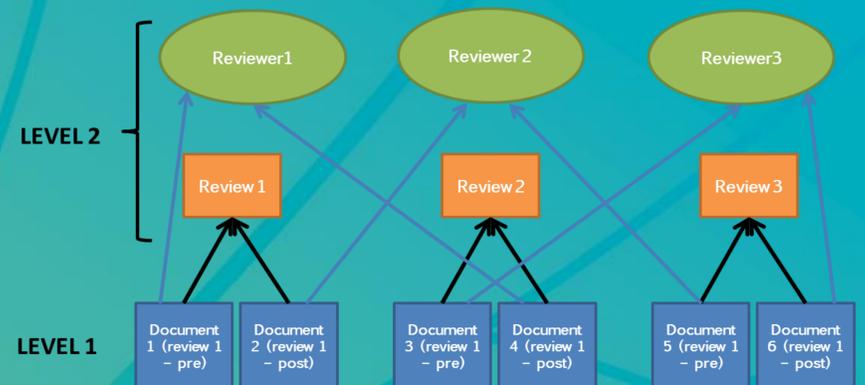
A final question examined reviewer's confidence that they could meet policymakers' needs based on the proposal.

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEWER SCORING PROPOSAL UPN 1		saxinstitute	
This questionnaire relates to Proposal UPN: 1 which is provided below.			
<b>Clarity of the information provided</b> 1. How clear is the proposal about why the policy maker is commissioning the review? Please circle or highlight in bold the one response which most closely reflects your view.		4. How clearly described is the method of the review? Please circle or highlight in bold the one response which most closely reflects your view.	
Not at all clear	Not very clear	Somewhat unclear	Somewhat clear
Clearly	Very clear	Clearly	Very clear
2. How clearly articulated are the questions to be answered in this review? Please circle or highlight in bold the one response which most closely reflects your view.		5. How clear is the proposal about what should be included in the reported? Please circle or highlight in bold the one response which most closely reflects your view.	
Not at all clear	Not very clear	Somewhat unclear	Somewhat clear
Clearly	Very clear	Clearly	Very clear
3. How clearly described is the scope of the review? Please circle or highlight in bold the one response which most closely reflects your view.		Overall level of confidence 6. Based on the information provided in the proposal, how confident are you that a researcher in this field will know enough to provide a rapid review of the literature that will meet the policy maker's needs? Please circle or highlight in bold the one response which most closely reflects your view.	
Not at all clear	Not very clear	Somewhat unclear	Somewhat clear
Clearly	Very clear	Confident	Very confident



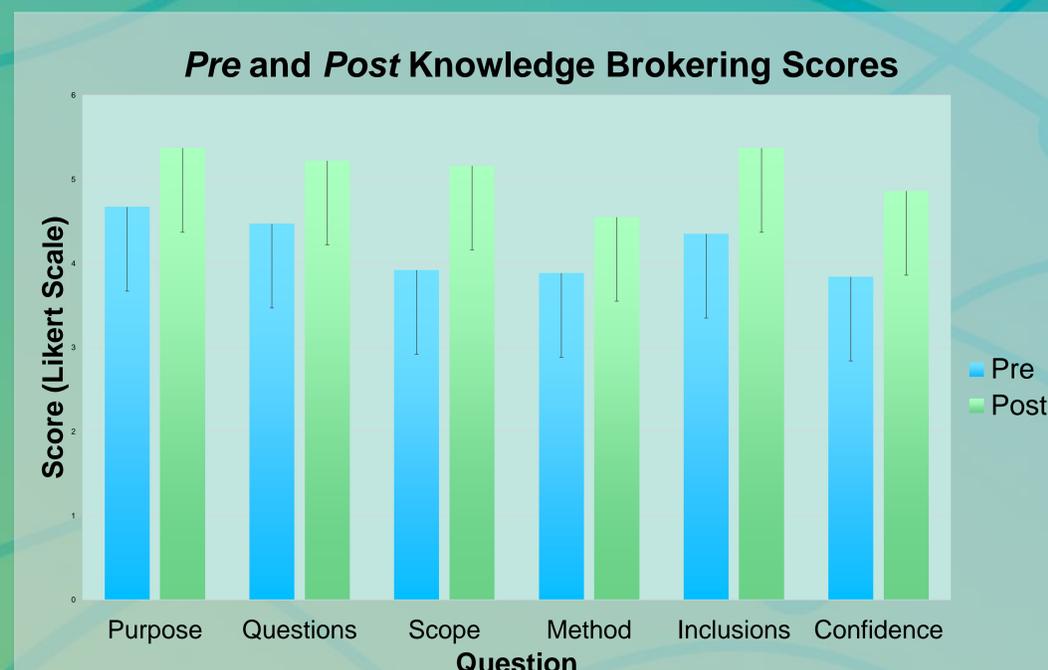
## Data Analysis

- Linear mixed models were used to examine whether there was a significant change in outcome scores for each of the review proposals (i.e., change in clarity of purpose, review question, scope, method and report inclusions and in reviewer confidence), *pre* and *post* knowledge brokering
- A cross-classified linear mixed model was used for each outcome score (Hox JJ, 2010), where n = 120 documents were nested within both review (n = 60) and reviewer (n = 30)
- Data were analysed with Stata Version 13.



## Results

The results showed that knowledge brokering significantly improved the scores for all six questions addressing the perceived clarity of the review proposal and confidence in meeting policymakers' needs.



## Conclusions

Knowledge brokering increased the clarity of information provided in Evidence Check rapid review proposals and the confidence of reviewers that they could meet policymakers' needs. Further research is needed to identify how the knowledge brokering process achieves these improvements and to test the applicability of the findings in other rapid review programs.