EVIDENCE-BASED GUIDELINES VERSUS SYSTEMATIC REVIEWS: THE APPLICATION OF EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICE IN AN AID ORGANISATION
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BACKGROUND
In searching for a method to develop guidelines and systematic reviews, Belgian Red Cross-Flanders encountered a wide variety in the terminology and methodology used in Evidence-Based Practice. A few examples are:

- ‘systematic review’
- ‘systematic literature search’
- ‘evidence-based guideline’
- ‘rapid review’
- ‘pragmatic systematic review’
- ‘rapid response service’

This raises some questions e.g. what are the definitions of the different terms? Which methodology was used to perform the literature review? The aim of Belgian Red Cross-Flanders is to clearly document its terminology, methodology and approach when developing guidelines and systematic reviews in a timely and cost-effective way.

METHODS AND RESULTS
Within its charter, the Centre for Evidence-Based Practice of Belgian Red Cross-Flanders clearly documents the methodology to develop evidence-based guidelines and systematic reviews in a timely and cost-conscious way.

FIGURE
Approach from practical question until the final result described in the methodological charter of the Centre for Evidence-Based Practice of Belgian Red Cross-Flanders (BRC-F)

QUESTION

Input: Operational Red Cross Service
PICO - question(s)

LITERATURE REVIEW

Scoping review(s)

Input: Steering group of the Centre for Evidence-Based Practice considering:
- Urgency
- Potential impact on practice and society (e.g. evidence quality)
- Economic and financial impact on BRC-F
- Relevance for BRC-F

Guideline

Methodology:
- multiple reviews
- according to AGREE II
- 1 reviewer
- narrow search

Highly relevant with potential high impact

Urgency: high

Systematic review

Methodology:
- one (highly sensitive) review
- according to Cochrane standards
- 2 reviewers
- sensitive search

Highly relevant with potential high impact

(In addition: acceptable evidence quality, major chance for peer-review publication)

Urgency: Low

No new project: no further review

Relevant for internal BRC-F decision(s)

Not relevant for BRC-F

EXPERT

Multidisciplinary expert panel

Expert(s)

RESULT

Evidence-based guideline (according to AGREE II)

Systematic review (according to Cochrane standards)

Internal decision(s)

No action

DISCUSSION
A methodology for the development of practice guidelines that takes into account time and resource constraints could be inspiring for other (aid) organisations who want to use the evidence-based methodology to support their activities. Additionally, it was recommended that authors of guidelines and systematic reviews document the methodology in a clear and transparent manner, e.g. with the inclusion of a clear method section within the guidelines and/or by publishing a methodological charter.

MORE INFORMATION?
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