



EVIDENCE SYNTHESIS
IRELAND



Rapid Review Methodology Priority Setting Partnership

1. Purpose of the PSP and background

This protocol sets out the aims, objectives and commitments of the Rapid Review Methodology Priority Setting Partnership (PSP) in line with James Lind Alliance (JLA) principles, and the roles and responsibilities of all involved (e.g. Steering Group, Partners) therein. This Protocol is a JLA requirement and will be published on the PSP's page of the JLA website. The Steering Group, which include JLA, will review the Protocol regularly.

The JLA is a non-profit making initiative, established in 2004. It brings patients, carers and clinicians together in PSPs. These PSPs identify and prioritise the evidence uncertainties, or 'unanswered questions', that they agree are the most important for research in their topic area. PSPs have focused traditionally on uncertainties about the effects of treatments, but some PSPs have chosen to broaden their scope beyond that. For example, JLA PSPs have been recently conducted to determine unanswered questions around trial methodology, specifically regarding the recruitment¹ and retention² of participants. The aim of a PSP is to help ensure that those who fund health research are aware of what really matters to patients, carers and clinicians. The National Institute for Health Research (NIHR – www.nihr.ac.uk) funds the infrastructure of the JLA that oversees the processes for PSPs, based at the Wessex Institute, University of Southampton.

Systematic reviews are a summary of existing research studies, and use 'systematic and explicit methods to identify, select and critically appraise relevant studies, and collect and analyse data from these studies' (www.getitglossary.org). Done well, systematic reviews provide a robust and comprehensive overview of the existing research for a given topic. However, systematic reviews require significant resources to complete and often can take up to two years to complete. As such, 'rapid reviews' have emerged as a form of evidence synthesis in which certain steps of the systematic review process are omitted or simplified to accelerate the process. Despite the clear benefits of the rapid review approach, there are some uncertainties and unanswered questions around how best to conduct them. This PSP will bring together people from across the world who are, or have been, involved directly in the design, conduct, reporting and use of evidence syntheses/systematic reviews/rapid reviews to determine the top 10 unanswered research questions on rapid review methodology i.e., how to improve the processes by which rapid reviews are planned, designed, conducted, analysed, reported and disseminated.

This PSP is funded by the Health Research Board (HRB) and the Health and Social Care division of the Public Health Agency (PHA) of Northern Ireland within Evidence Synthesis Ireland (ESI). Ethical approval for all stages of the PSP was approved by the National University of Ireland, Galway Research Ethics Committee in April 2020.

2. Aims, objectives and scope of the PSP

The aim of the Rapid Review Methodology PSP is to identify and prioritise unanswered questions about how to improve the processes by which rapid reviews are planned, designed, conducted, analysed, reported and disseminated from patient, clinical and research perspectives and then prioritise those that patients, carers, clinicians and researchers agree are the most important for research to address.

The objectives of the PSP are to:

- work with patients, clinicians and researchers to identify uncertainties and unanswered questions about rapid review processes
- to agree by consensus a prioritised 'Top 10' list of those uncertainties and unanswered questions which will be used to inform future research
- to publicise the results of the PSP and process
- to take the results to research commissioning bodies to be considered for funding.