SWAR 19: Comparison of training methods for patient and public contributors performing systematic review tasks

Objective of this SWAR
To compare different methods of training patient and public involvement (PPI) contributors to complete systematic review tasks.

Study area: Training, Patient and public involvement
Sample type: Patient and public contributors to research
Estimated funding level needed: Low

Background
Patient and public involvement (PPI) in research is defined as "research being carried out 'with' or 'by' members of the public rather than 'to', 'about', or 'for' them". Involving PPI contributors in the design, delivery and reporting of studies adds value to research, through introduction of a wider range of views and lived experiences.(1) PPI co-production, in which PPI contributors join a research team as equal partners, is a growing area of work, emphasising the importance of power-sharing and inclusive research practice.(2)

PPI contributors who join systematic review teams may need training to perform tasks, such as title/abstract screening or data extraction. There is evidence from previous SWARs that a "scaffolding" approach, in which learners undergo repeated (3 to 5) 1:1 sessions of training with reducing levels of trainer support, is optimal for novice reviewer training.(3) However, in the context of PPI, this poses several challenges for the review team:

1) Research teams may be constrained by costs, and multiple 1:1 training sessions may not be possible within a research budget.
2) PPI contributors may be unable to commit to several hours of training, if for example they have caring or work commitments.
3) PPI contributors may feel less integrated with the research team, or feel that they are working on their own, if all work is done on a 1:1 basis.

This SWAR would help to resolve uncertainties about training for PPI contributors, balancing the need for robust training to perform tasks against time and budget constraints for the review team and PPI contributors. This training would cover each systematic review task that PPI contributors are asked to participate in (e.g., screening, data extraction, quality assessment, data synthesis).

Interventions and comparators
Intervention 1: Written instructions only (comparator). PPI contributors will be given written instructions and asked to complete a short trial task (e.g., screen 20 abstracts), and provide self-ratings for confidence in completing the task.
Intervention 2: 1:n session of small group training and written instructions. PPI contributors attend small group training together and are asked to repeat the short trial task (e.g., screen a further 20 abstracts) and again provide self-ratings for confidence in completing the task.
Intervention 3: 1:1 session of reviewer task training and written instructions. PPI contributors attend 1:1 training with a senior review team member, which is provided on request. After this, they are asked to repeat the short trial task (e.g., screen a further 20 abstracts) and again provide self-ratings for confidence in completing the task.

Index Type: Full Review

Method for allocating to intervention or comparator
Before and After Study

Outcome measures
Primary: Inter-rater reliability and learner error rate. Task completion
Secondary: Self-reported confidence; Time taken to complete task; Self-reported satisfaction in training; Narrative feedback

Analysis plans
Descriptive and comparative statistics will be used to compare primary and secondary outcomes across interventions. Narrative feedback from PPI contributors and novice researchers will be collated and used to inform future training sessions.

Possible problems in implementing this SWAR
Review teams may have a mixture of PPI contributors and novice reviewers, or a single PPI contributor. In this case, we would recommend using this protocol to deliver training to a mixed group of PPI contributors and other novice reviewers.

Review teams may also have limited time, and resources to develop and deliver training sessions as outlined in this protocol. However, training is essential if PPI contributors and novice reviewers are to complete review tasks, and parts of this protocol may be adapted (e.g., providing small group training only) to expedite reviews.

Some PPI contributors or novice reviewers may find it difficult to speak up or ask questions in small groups. Some PPI contributors may have performed research tasks before, or there may be different levels of reading comprehension. It is important for the lead reviewer to facilitate a non-threatening and collaborative environment, to establish baseline knowledge by meeting contributors beforehand, and to plan the training session carefully.

This SWAR will be of limited value if a small number of reviews are able to implement it.

References
1) Hickey G. The potential for coproduction to add value to research. Health Expectations 2018;21(4):693-4.
2) Ocloo J, Matthews R. From tokenism to empowerment: progressing patient and public involvement in healthcare improvement. BMJ Quality and Safety 2016;25(8):626-32.
3) Price A. SWAR 09: Use of 1:1 sessions for training and supporting novice reviewers in the conduct of online systematic reviewing tasks. Available from: https://www.qub.ac.uk/sites/TheNorthernIrelandNetworkforTrialsMethodologyResearch/FileStore/SWARFileStore/Filetoupload,831774,en.pdf

Publications or presentations of this SWAR design

Examples of the implementation of this SWAR

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