

SWAR 16: Consideration of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) in systematic reviews.

Objective of this SWAR

Our aim is to gather information that will help researchers to consider equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) when assessing studies that are eligible for a systematic review. We will use two EDI checklists, which will help us to investigate the quality of the included studies regarding EDI, and to decide which checklist is better to use.

Study area: Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) thinking in systematic reviews

Sample type: Evidence synthesis researcher

Estimated funding level needed: Low

Background

People conducting health research need to think about everyone who will benefit from the project, considering things such as age, gender, race, where people live and what types of lives they lead. We call this equity, diversity and inclusive (EDI) thinking. Historically, researchers have not always been very good at this. They have often focused on the easiest people to reach or recruit when asking them to join their research studies, rather than an appropriate range of people to whom the research might be useful.

This project will investigate EDI thinking in the context of systematic reviews in health care. It will look at the assessment of how inclusive the included studies have been in terms of EDI thinking. We will embed this SWAR in our systematic review of the experiences of physical activity among people with heart failure. We will use two EDI checklists, which will help us to highlight how good the studies that are eligible for our review were in terms of EDI and to decide which checklist is better to use. We have a group of 13 people with heart failure (Patient and public Involvement group) to give a reality check on what we do. Finally, this work will help other researchers to consider EDI when conducting systematic reviews.

Interventions and comparators

Intervention 1: The PROGRESS tool,[1] which prompts reviewers to consider the aspects of EDI, including place of residence, race, occupation, gender, religion, and education during the data extraction process.

Intervention 2: The Leicester quality Impact Tool,[2] which prompts reviewers to consider the aspects of EDI before and after conducting the systematic review.

Index Type: Protocol, Full Review

Method for allocating to intervention or comparator

Not applicable

Outcome measures

Primary: Objective and subjective factors to compare and evaluate the two tools: (a) itemized list of process; and (b) resulting output.

Secondary: (a) user (research team) experience; and (b) public opinion of output (PPI group).

Analysis plans

We will use a novel framework for the primary and secondary outcomes to compare and evaluate the two EDI tools. This will be completed for both tools with reference to our review. We will compare the information produced by each tool for the host systematic review and identify any gaps/differences between them. This will be followed by discussion and final recommendations on the tools.

Possible problems in implementing this SWAR

The recommendations may become out of date if these EDI tools are modified or further EDI tools are developed.

References

1. O'Neill J, Tabish H, Welch V, *et al.* Applying an equity lens to interventions: using PROGRESS ensures consideration of socially stratifying factors to illuminate inequities in health. *Journal of Clinical Epidemiology* 2014;67(1):56-64
2. <https://ethnicealthresearch.org.uk/equality-impact-assessment/>

Publications or presentations of this SWAR design

This SWAR is funded by Wellcome Trust Institutional Strategic Support Fund (ISSF) via the Elizabeth Black Institute (Bristol) Research for Equality, Diversity & Inclusion in Health and Biomedicine and we presented our plans to the committee in September 2022. This SWAR is mentioned in a University of Bristol blog as part of our ongoing heart failure research:

<https://capcbristol.blogs.bristol.ac.uk/2022/09/29/championing-a-people-era-in-heart-failure-research/>

Examples of the implementation of this SWAR

Duncan L, Essery R, Dawson S, Ismail Y, Baird J, Butcher K, Whight E, Johnson R, Huntley AL. What are the experiences of people with heart failure regarding participation in physical activity? A systematic review, meta-aggregation and development of a logic model. *BMJ Open*. 2025 Apr 5;15(4):e092457. doi: 10.1136/bmjopen-2024-092457

Future details about this SWAR

Future details about the SWAR are available [here](#), along with a [slidedeck](#).

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