**PAPER NUMBER #86**

**Rapid Reviews: Synthesizing Evidence to Inform Public Health Practice**

**Presenting Author**

Maureen Dobbins

**Affiliation**

National Collaborating Centre for Methods and Tools, McMaster University

**Country of residence**

Canada

**Objectives/aims**

As public health organizations across Canada adopt and implement evidence-informed approaches to public health decision-making, there is a need for up to date evidence that can be applied to local contexts. While the most rigorous approach is to find or do a systematic review, timelines and resources often dictate a rapid review of the literature. Rapid reviews are tailored for a shorter timeline, but still use rigorous and transparent methodology to ensure that the best available research evidence is used in decision making.

This presentation will outline the steps required to conduct a rapid review to effectively communicate synthesized evidence to stakeholders. These steps include defining the question, searching for research evidence, appraising the quality of evidence and synthesizing evidence.

**Methods**

When conducting a rapid review, it is critical to specifically define a focused question. PICO (Population, Intervention, Control, Outcome) and alternative PECO (Population, Exposure, Control, Outcome) and PS (Population, Situation) questions refine the scope of a review and guide inclusion and exclusion criteria. To maximize search efficiency, research evidence can be structured in an evidence hierarchy known as the 6S Pyramid where the most highly synthesized evidence is located at the top of the hierarchy. This presentation will emphasize the importance of critically appraising included studies and provide an overview of critical appraisal tools for various types of studies. Finally, evidence must be synthesized so that it can be effectively communicated to stakeholders for meaningful recommendation. Presenters will outline the data extraction process and tools available to support the process. The presentation will also provide an introduction to interpreting results and forest plots.

**Main findings**

Resources to support each of these steps in participants’ own work after the conference will be described, including a free, online Rapid Review Guidebook developed by the National Collaborating Centre for Methods and Tools (NCCMT) that details each step in the rapid review process, with notes on how to tailor the process given resource limitations. The Guidebook also includes a guide to writing the final report, with details on how to structure the report and what to include in each section.

Rapid reviews are emerging as a popular method for synthesizing and communicating current evidence. It is critical to use rigorous methodology to ensure that the best available evidence informs decision making.