**PAPER NUMBER #345**

**How the worlds of policy and research interact to produce evidence for public policy decisions**

**Presenting Author**

Prof Sandy Oliver

**Affiliation**

EPPI-Centre, UCL Institute of Education, and Faculty of the Humanities, University of Johannesburg

**Country of residence**

United Kingdom

**Objectives/aims**

Research evidence is commonly criticised for lacking relevance and timeliness for policy decisions. When policy makers fund systematic reviews, their insistence on both timeliness and relevance to their broad areas of responsibility, the populations they serve and the systems and environments they work within, raises new challenges. The aims here are to identify challenges and potential solutions.

**Methods**

We have reflected on ten years’ experience of producing systematic reviews for the global south to analyse the challenges of responding to decision-makers’ evidence needs. This experience includes authoring ten systematic reviews, supporting 50+ research teams producing their own systematic reviews, seeking systematic reviews to deliver evidence within days, and studying policy and research teams interact to co-design systematic reviews.

**Main findings**

Open ‘what works’ questions and those about systems and logistics need systematic reviews that make sense of extensive literatures with the help of social theories, logic models and ecological frameworks. This works particularly well when policy and research teams tackle this intellectual framing together; engaging, questioning, listening and challenging each other to co-construct the review design. Existing evidence addressing systems or logistics questions is often lacking in repositories for systematic reviews (e.g. evidence gap maps). These might benefit from greater co-construction too.