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# IN PRODUCING EVIDENCE SUMMARIES TO INFORM WHO POLICY BRIEFS FOR THE AFRICAN REGION ON NON-COMMUNICABLE DISEASES, IS THERE CONGRUENCE WITH THE COCHRANE DISSEMINATION CHECKLIST?

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## INTRODUCTION

The World Health Organization (WHO) AFRO region has major inequalities in health, due to inadequate health systems across Member States, despite an increase in total health expenditure.

The AFRO regional office has taken steps to provide countries with support to help identify and plan key interventions that will strengthen health systems towards the attainment of Universal Health Coverage and Sustainable Development Goals. The WHO Regional Committee for Africa elaborated a comprehensive framework of actions to guide Member States and aim to generate concise policy briefs that will consolidate the best available evidence that addresses questions which decision makers find pertinent.

Cochrane South Africa was tasked with using available systematic reviews for non-communicable diseases (NCDs) that addressed key priority areas, to produce evidence summaries. The WHO provided a custom-made evidence summary template for this assignment.

Cochrane has a checklist of key elements that need to be included in dissemination products.

## METHODOLOGY

Translating the key evidence from relevant systematic reviews was undertaken using the WHO provided template. The 18 question Cochrane dissemination checklist was later used to compare if all, or most items on the list were covered in the WHO template. We did not perform statistical analyses to determine agreement between items, but instead looked for common themes and ideas expressed in both tools.

## RESULTS

There were 13 items on the Cochrane checklist that were found to be in common with the WHO evidence summary template. The following items were found to be key in producing an easy to understand dissemination document for the target audience:

- Involving the target audience or seeking their feedback, using plain language, having a relevant title using words familiar and producing a document that is specific for them.
- Structuring the content so people can quickly scan and read and find key messages.
- Giving links to the audience for more detailed information if required.
- Specifying the populations, interventions, comparisons, and outcomes in the studies, and how up to date the review is.
- Describing the certainty of evidence.
- Clearly stating that the dissemination product was prepared by Cochrane authors. Including information about who the systematic review authors are, how they were funded, and any conflicts of interest.
- Avoiding making recommendations.

## AIM

To determine if there is congruence between the WHO evidence summary template and the Cochrane dissemination checklist when translating key evidence from systematic reviews on NCDs, to produce evidence summaries to inform policy briefs for the Afro region.

## CONCLUSION

When translating knowledge to a target audience it is important to follow certain steps that will ensure the dissemination product is relevant, easy to understand and tailored for the end user. The Cochrane dissemination checklist is a useful tool that can be used to ensure that certain key elements are included in the dissemination product being generated.

