

Development of a decision support tool for clinical end-users of POS: findings from a programme to enhance routine clinical outcome tool implementation

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Introduction

Routine clinical use of Patient Reported Outcome Measures (PROMs) such as the Palliative care Outcome Scale (POS) seems inhibited by a lack of guidance on how to respond to reported problems.

The aim of this work was twofold; i) to determine for which POS items such guidance is needed, and ii) to set up a Delphi study which will produce a decision support tool (DST) on the use of these POS items in clinical care.

Methods

For stage i) participants of a POS training day completed a questionnaire on their need for clinical guidance in using specific POS items.

For stage ii) a teleconference with international experts (clinicians, researchers and patient representatives) was held to determine the audience and format of the DST. On selected POS items a systematic search for guidelines and systematic reviews was conducted, and key experts assisted in creating recommendations on how to respond to scores on these items.

Results

Stage 1: The need for guidance on POS items

90% of 38 participants needed guidance on the use of POS in clinical care.

Most help was needed for the items:

- ✓ depression (n=8)/feel good about yourself (n=10)
- ✓ information given (n=7)
- ✓ family worries (n=4)
- ✓ Key experts (n=3): guidance is needed on breathlessness

Stage 2: Setting up a Delphi study to produce a Decision Support Tool (DST)

A teleconference with experts (n=19) found that the DST should:

- ✓ Support clinicians with different levels of expertise
- ✓ Be produced in different formats

A systematic search for guidelines and systematic reviews was conducted to come to recommendations on how to respond to different levels of aforementioned POS items

- ✓ Pubmed, Google Scholar, Cochrane Database, York DARE database + websites of NICE, National Guideline Clearinghouse, the Canadian Medical Association and google.com were searched
- ✓ 43 sources were included (some referring to broader or the same guidelines/sources)
- ✓ 47 recommendations were created to be tested in the Delphi study

Examples recommendations Delphi study

The appropriateness of each recommendation will be rated (1-9 scale) for all the different answer categories (0-4) of a POS-item.

POS topic	Example recommendation
Family anxiety	A family conference should be held to exchange information, assess needs, provide emotional support and create a care plan.
Information needs	Assess patients' preferences for information, including the specific content and extent of information that is preferred
Depression	Inform patients about sources for support (e.g. community groups).
Breathlessness	Possible useful non-pharmacological interventions include: The use of walking aids

Conclusion

As PROMs are increasingly used to improve quality in healthcare, our project is a novel example of how implementation can be enhanced. The involvement of users, experts and the literature will inform the creation of an evidence-based yet clinically useful DST.

Current work has tested the recommendations in the Delphi study and will produce various formats of the DST. The DST will be made available via various channels, including www.pos-pal.org.

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