

AGREE For Health Systems (AGREE-HS): A new knowledge translation tool to direct the development, reporting and appraisal of health systems guidance

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Competing Interests

No financial or professional conflicts of interest.



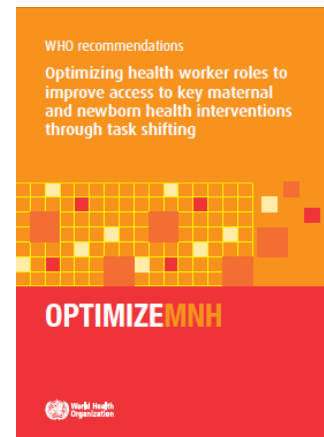
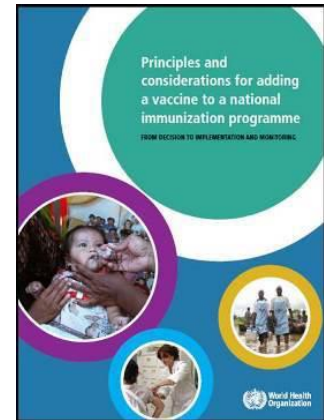
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Health Systems Guidance (HSG)

- Systematically developed statements that assist with decisions about addressing health system challenges
- Informs policy decisions related to health system governance, financial arrangements, system organization, or design and delivery of effective health programs and services
- Developed at the global, national, or regional level (e.g., WHO, national agencies, ministries of health)



The Problem



- Conceptual and methodological challenges:
 - Varied types of evidence
 - Complexity of health systems
 - Contextual factors influencing design and adoptability of recommendations

- Few tools and resources available to inform:
 - Information that should be included in HSG documents
 - How to assess the quality of HSG

Study Objective

- To create a reliable, valid and useful tool to appraise the quality of HSG documents that can also be used to support HSG development and reporting.



Methods Overview



- Critical interpretive synthesis of the literature to identify candidate HSG quality criteria
- Survey to evaluate the importance of candidate HSG quality criteria
- Development of draft HSG appraisal tool
- Survey to test the usability of the draft tool

Critical Interpretive Synthesis

□ Questions:

- How is HSG quality defined in the literature?
- What criteria, instruments, checklists, systems, etc. have been used to define HSG quality or reporting requirements or to differentiate between HSG on the basis of quality?
- What methods have been used to develop these criteria?
- What methods have been used to address health system issues/challenges?

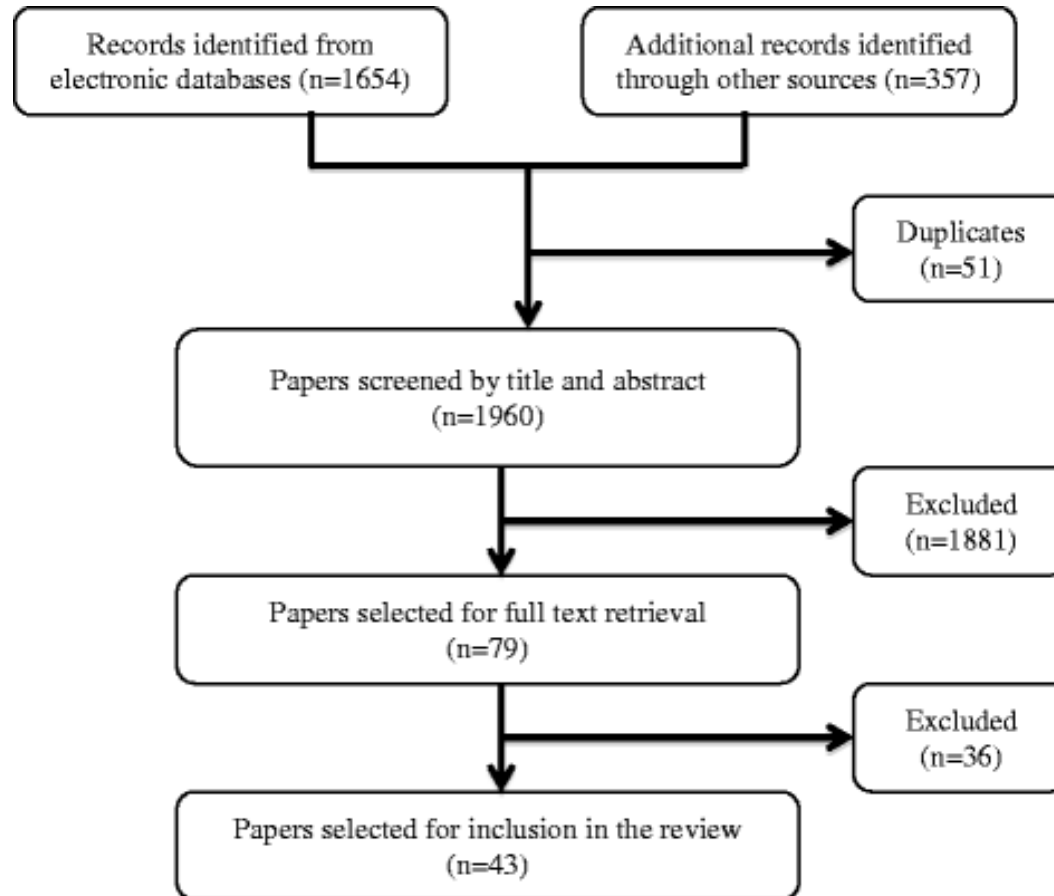
□ Eligibility criteria:

- 2000 or later
- Any context, any study design, English/French/Spanish language

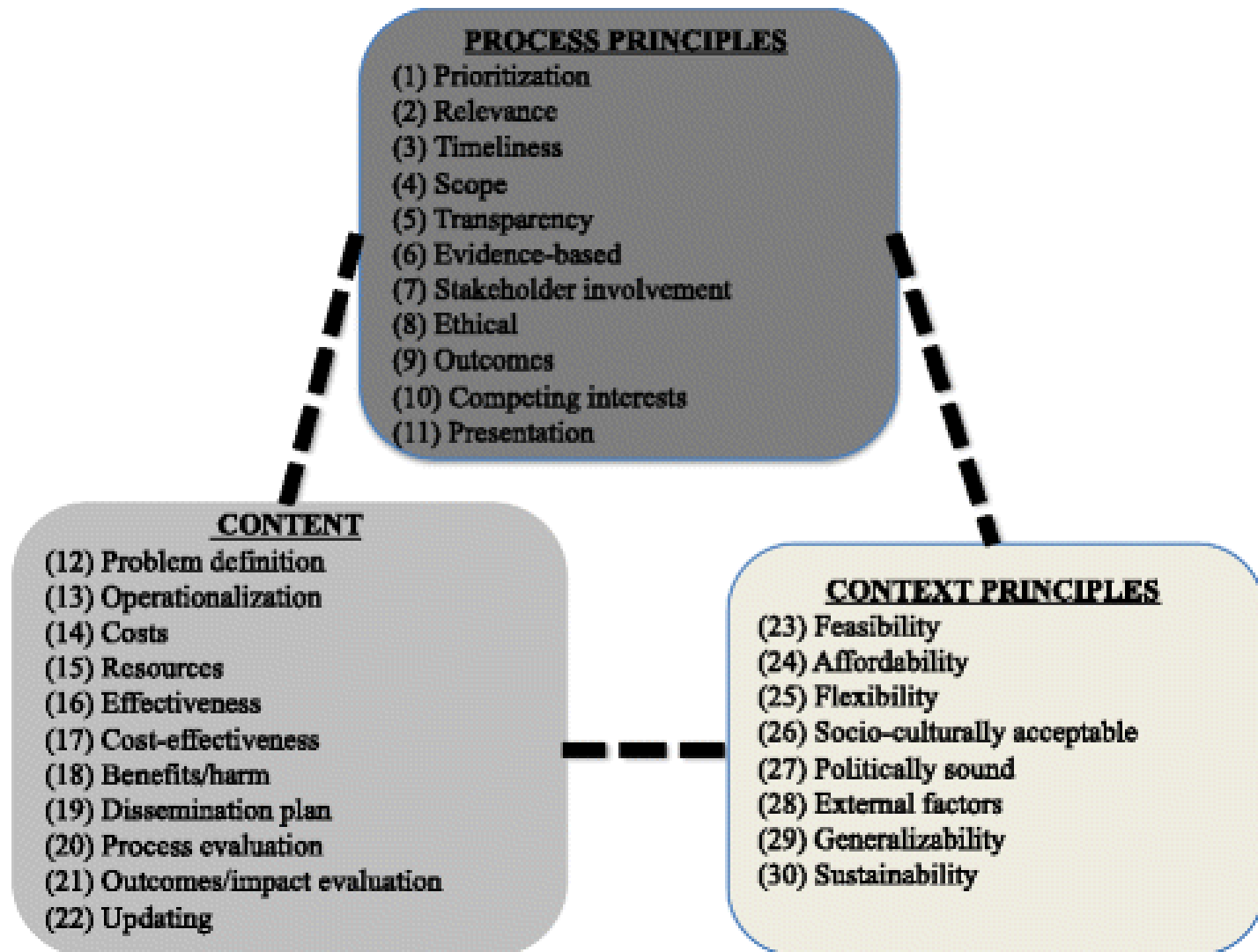
□ Sources:

- Electronic databases, grey literature, contact with experts & colleagues

Critical Interpretive Synthesis Results



Critical Interpretive Synthesis Results



Study 1: Importance of Candidate Criteria

- 50 international HSG developers, policy-makers, researchers invited to complete an online survey
- 7-point scale to rate agreement with 4 statements for each of the 30 candidate criteria:
 - ▣ Defining feature of HSG
 - ▣ Important concept to address in the development process of HSG
 - ▣ Important concept in the appraisal of HSG to differentiate between higher and lower quality guidance documents
 - ▣ Important concept to be reported in HSG

Study 1: Results

- 41 participants completed the survey (82% response rate)

	Range of means across 30 items (7-pt scale)
Defining feature of HSG	4.9 to 6.6
Important in HSG development	5.0 to 6.7
Important in HSG appraisal	4.7 to 6.7
Important in HSG reporting	5.0 to 6.7

Beta AGREE-HS Tool

- 32 items within four domains
- Item name and description
- Users assess whether each of the items are addressed in the HSG document
 - Yes
 - No



Study 2: Usability Testing

- 35 international HSG developers, policy-makers, researchers invited to apply the draft appraisal tool to a HSG document and complete an online usability survey
- **Usability questions:** Easy to understand? Easy to apply? Yes/No scale appropriate? Useful for development of HSG, appraisal of HSG, reporting of HSG?

Study 2: Results

- 26 participants completed the survey (74% response rate)

Easy to understand	mean 5.9 (7-pt scale)
Easy to apply	mean 5.6
Yes/No scale appropriate	mean 4.1

Useful for HSG development	85%
Useful for HSG appraisal	92%
Useful for HSG reporting	81%

Publications to date

- Ako-Arrey DE, Brouwers MC, Lavis JN, Giacomini MK, AGREE-HS Team. **Health systems guidance appraisal—a critical interpretive synthesis.** Implementation Science 2016;11:9.
- Ako-Arrey DE, Brouwers MC, Lavis JN, Giacomini MK, AGREE-HS Team. **Health system guidance appraisal—concept evaluation and usability testing.** Implementation Science 2016;11:3.

Next Steps

- Complete development of the AGREE-HS User Manual
- Face validity testing of the User Manual content
- Usability and reliability testing of the AGREE-HS
- Publication and dissemination of the final AGREE-HS



Conclusions

- Favourable survey results established face validity of the AGREE-HS items
- Preliminary AGREE-HS usability results were positive but demonstrated that further refinement was required
- Successful collaboration with an international team of health system and policy experts
- Once complete, the AGREE-HS will facilitate informed decision-making about HSG and promote a culture of informed HSG developers and consumers

Conclusions

- The AGREE-HS will be useful for:
 - **Policy-makers and health system administrators:** to differentiate between higher and lower quality HSG to inform policy decisions and system design
 - **HSG developers:** as a guide for their HSG methodological protocols with respect to development and reporting expectations
 - **Educators and researchers:** as a teaching tool to help learners acquire skills related to health systems

For More Information

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