

## **EAHIL proposal for SIG Evidence-based Information 2018**

**Name of proposed subgroup:** Evidence-based information

### **Rationale for subgroup**

Evidence-based medicine and evidence-based practice includes the use of the best available research evidence to guide decision-making. Considering the impact of systematic reviews and other evidence-based products in decision-making, the method for comprehensively gathering the information about a specific, well-defined health issue is extremely important to ensure conclusions are based on the best available evidence and to reduce bias. Therefore, one of the characteristics of a systematic review, together with a clear search method description, is the publication of the search strategy used for each resource in a transparent manner. However, Gómez-Sánchez et al. (EAHIL 2016) and Jane Falconer (EAHIL 2018) respectively shared similar results to prior studies pointing out that the search strategies accompanying systematic reviews continue to be often badly reported or to show a very poor methodological quality.

In addition, the following motion was carried at the EAHIL conference in Seville (2016), proposed by Isla Kuhn and Tom Roper:

“The General Assembly notes with concern the continuing failure of many systematic reviews in the literature to report their information retrieval methods, as required by existing standards such as PRISMA. These failures have been highlighted in presentations to this conference, and occur despite plentiful reporting guidelines, such as those collated by the EquatorNetwork. The General Assembly calls on the officers of EAHIL to open a dialogue with publishers, with a view to improving systematic review methods reporting, in particular more rigorous application of existing standards via the peer review process. Furthermore, to ask the EAHIL board to liaise with the EquatorNetwork and other interested parties with a view to promoting awareness of and adherence to these standards by researchers and authors.”

In order to address these issues and take action, we suggest the creation of a new EAHIL Special Interest Group: Evidence-based Information.

### **Aim and activities of subgroup**

The main aim of this group is to **bring together and connect** all EAHIL members who are interested and want to improve the quality of systematic reviews and other evidence-based products.

Proposed activities are:

- To **support knowledge exchange** by providing technical support (mailing list, ...) and opportunities (webinars, ...) to discuss problems, share information, experiences and best practices (e.g. discussing tactics on how to stimulate researchers to include a reference librarian in their team writing systematic reviews for writing the literature search methods section of the paper or abstract).
- To **provide and support continuing professional development for health librarians and researchers** on topics related to systematic reviews and other evidence-based products (e.g. by providing tutorials/online material, sharing materials like PRISMA, ...).
- To **appeal to the publishers of medical journals** to consider the quality of SRs and include better guidelines about methodological and reporting issues and **advocate for**

**inclusion of biomedical reference librarians as editors in the peer-review processes** (e.g. importance of reference librarians as part of the research team, importance of peer-reviewing of search strategies, importance of compliance to related standards, ...)

- To **develop strategies to improve the visibility** of systematic reviews and other evidence-based products.
- To **connect with other interest groups or projects and support the dissemination or development of international standards** (e.g. use of registries of search strategies like PROSPERO, use of standard and checklists like PRESS or PRISMA, collaborate with the SR SIG of MLA; the Knowledge Synthesis Interest Group of the Canadian Health Libraries Association, ...).

As Board members will be aware, our request for indications of interest in the proposal via the EAHIL-list generated many favourable responses and also some discussion about the scope of such a group's aims and activities. Should the Board approve the SIG, an early next step for us would be to discuss and refine the group's aims and activities with those members wishing to participate. This may include establishing several working areas that could be defined, should the SIG be approved by the Board.

**Supporting EAHIL members:**

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Tom Roper	UK
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