Evidence-Based Reproductive Health Care

By

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At

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Training of Core Group of RH Experts and sharing of RH best practices

General Objectives

- Accelerate and scale up the implementation of RH programmes in the African Region
- Promote the use of evidence based approach in RH care services
Training of Core Group of RH Experts and sharing of RH best practices

- Evidence based RH approach
  - Providing the evidence
  - Accessing information on the evidence
  - Translating evidence into practice

- Best practices
What is Evidence-based health Care?

Evidence Based Health Care refers to the policies and practices employed in the prevention and treatment of health care problems based on principles which have been proven through rigorous scientific methods.
Evidence-based health care (EBHC) is...

“...the conscientious, explicit, and judicious use of current best evidence in making decisions about the care of individual patients.”

Sackett et al, 1996
Principle of EBHC

In healthcare, the overall objective is to deliver interventions that:

‘do more good than harm’
In the past traditional health care practices depended on:

- Trial and error
- Expert opinion
- Information from Textbooks or Journals; or
- The results of limited Research that the practitioner is aware of
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Why do we need to use evidence in our clinical practice?
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- Lack of reliable and valid research evidence or lack of access to such evidence may lead to the use of practices with unknown effectiveness or even those that have been demonstrated to be harmful.

- There is, therefore, a need to generate, summarize and disseminate rigorous research evidence to guide clinical practice and to identify further research priorities.
Why do we need objective evidence of effectiveness?

- Our understanding of human biology is full of gaps - we can’t predict effectiveness.
- Subjective clinical impressions are misleading (tend to overestimate the effectiveness of care - placebo effect).
- Adverse effects are often difficult to identify because they are unexpected.
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- It must be admitted that evidence about the effects of health care interventions is one of several inputs needed to make the right health care decisions.

- In addition to such evidence, one needs information about the epidemiological and community setting, about the clinical condition one is dealing with, about the society (what it wants and can afford) and about the patient’s values.
Moreover, health care providers and policy makers are confronted with increasing amounts of information that they are unable to access due to lack of time or resources.

As a result their knowledge of current best care lags far behind existing evidence derived from health care research.

Patients are therefore often denied effective treatments while treatments that are ineffective or even harmful may be used leading to unnecessary suffering and even death.
One major problem is that knowledge and performance deteriorate
The Slippery Slope

Knowledge of current best care

Years since graduation

CEBM web site:  
http://cebm.jr2.ox.ac.uk/

$r = -0.54$

$p < 0.001$
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- Health Care Personnel need continuous updated information

- But, there is:
  - Time constraint
  - Textbooks are out of date; and
  - Journals are disorganized and limited
The biomedical literature is vast:

- Over 2 million articles are published annually in over 20,000 journals
- 500 metres of literature
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- In an attempt to keep abreast of the evidence many people rely on the summaries provided by experts
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However, there is increasing evidence that expert reviews may be biased.

Experts often:

- Do not use reliable methods for identifying and selecting research for inclusion in reviews;
- Do not pay attention to methodological quality of studies;
- Do not use appropriate methods for synthesizing data from primary studies;
- Consequently, expert reviews may be misleading.
Systematic review is a method that has been developed over the past decade to address the above shortcomings.

Unlike traditional expert reviews, systematic reviews involve transparent methods that are defined *a priori* and are included in the review protocol.
Systematic review

- Scientific methodology for **synthesising** the results of trials

- A **reliable** and **less biased** summary of data that address focussed clinical questions

- Continually **updated** as new trials become available
History
The Cochrane Collaboration

- The Cochrane Collaboration is an international organisation dedicated to producing systematic reviews and making them available to health workers and consumers.

- This information is published electronically every 3 months in the Cochrane Library.
The Cochrane Collaboration

- 1970’s: Archie Cochrane, British epidemiologist, recognised that health professionals lacked access to reliable reviews of medical evidence
- 1980’s: the Oxford database of Perinatal Trials was developed
- 1993: Cochrane Collaboration has extended this process to other fields of health care.
Where is the Current best evidence in Reproductive Health Care?

- Cochrane Library
- WHO Reproductive Health Library
RHL is

- a specialist database of reproductive health
- focuses on high-priority problems in developing countries
- aims to ensure access through:
  - affordability
  - efficient, systematic, large-scale dissemination
- updated annually
Dissemination
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Dissemination and Training Activities

Aug 01 to October 02
The WHO Evidence-Based Health Care Training Initiative

I wish all of us a pleasant Workshop
Thank you!