

Enhancing Expert Elicitation in Health Technology Assessment: Practical Insights and Recommendations

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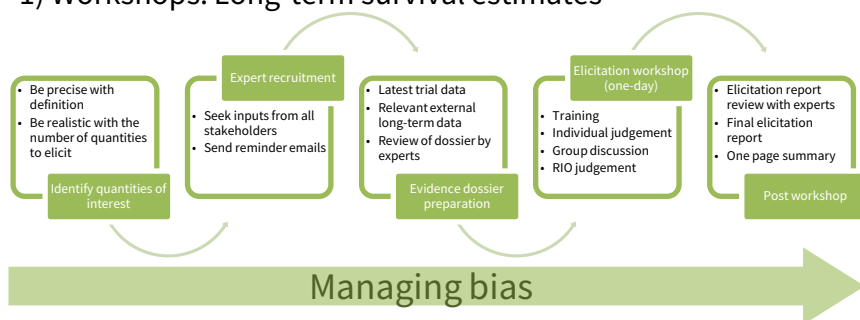
Background

Expert elicitation is an invaluable method for obtaining expert judgments, particularly in areas with limited evidence. Health technology assessment (HTA) guidelines, such as the NICE Methods Guide, recommend expert elicitation to address evidence gaps. While commonly used protocols such as SHELF¹, IDEA² and MRC protocol³ in expert elicitation share some similarities, they also differ significantly in design and execution.

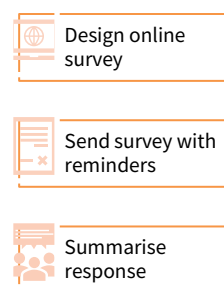
Methods

We adapted the **SHELF protocol** to elicit two long-term survival estimates in two workshops for uveal melanoma patients: one online with six experts and one face-to-face with five different experts. Additionally, we administered an online survey with three questions (two qualitative and one quantitative) to gather opinions on healthcare resource use.

1) Workshops: Long-term survival estimates



2) Survey: Healthcare resource use



Four months

Elicitation workshop

Results

Overwhelming positive response from the clinical community

- Two workshops to maximise expert participation
- Online (6 experts), Face-to-face (5 experts)

Online vs. face-to-face

- Equally effective, benefits of online include;
 - + Able to encourage individual expert to contribute
 - + Use of individual break out rooms to encourage experts to ask methodological questions

Group discussion

- Extremely valuable: enhance the credibility of the elicited value
- Facilitator's role is important

Online survey

- Preparation required less effort
- Responses were heterogeneous
- Challenge to draw definitive conclusions

Conclusions

- Online surveys may not be suitable for eliciting critical model input parameters.
- Group facilitation and expert interaction are essential in elicitation exercises to ensure the credibility, accuracy, consistency, and transparency of expert judgments.
- Contrary to concerns in the literature, time constraints and expert availability may not pose significant issues in HTA practice.
- When conducted properly, online elicitation workshops can also deliver high-quality outcomes.

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References

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2. Hemming V, ..., Wintle BC. A practical guide to structured expert elicitation using the IDEA protocol. *Methods Ecol Evol.* 2018; 9: 169–180.
3. Bojke L, ..., Taylor A. Developing a reference protocol for structured expert elicitation in health-care decision-making: a mixed-methods study. *Health Technol Assess.* 2021 Jun;25(37):1-124.