

Is it worth it to share data that are gathered during systematic reviews? Is it worth it to NOT share data? A Panel Discussion

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BACKGROUND

Research synthesis activities are expensive and time-consuming. During these activities, tomes of data pertaining to included studies are gathered from multiple sources that often extend well beyond journal articles, such as conference abstracts, study registries, regulatory documents, clinical study reports, and information gathered from Websites or contact with study authors. While data sharing and platforms for doing so (e.g., ClinicalTrials.gov, Vivli, Figshare, Open Science Framework) have received considerable attention in the context of data collected during primary studies, relatively little attention has been paid to sharing of data gathered during systematic reviews.

OBJECTIVES

To (1) explore the various advantages and challenges with data sharing in the context of systematic reviews, (2) describe the Systematic Review Data Repository (SRDR) – one specific platform for data sharing during systematic reviews, and (3) engage in a broader discussion across fields about the value of systematic review data sharing and, potentially, explore cross-linking of platforms.

“METHODS AND RESULTS”

Some advantages of systematic review data sharing are that it can potentially: (1) advance open science; (2) help reduce the large amount of redundancy in the systematic review enterprise; (3) facilitate updates of systematic reviews by making prior extracted data available to the same (or different) systematic review team conducting the update; and (4) drive various kinds of methodological research (i.e., “research on research”). Data sharing also could help facilitate the function of an “evidence ecosystem.” Some challenges of data sharing include: (1) if the data that are being shared have errors, these errors would be perpetuated through data sharing; (2) there are intellectual property considerations associated with the systematic review authors gathering the additional data that are not reported in the public domain; and (3) there are considerations related to lost revenue when data are shared. SRDR is a free, online, open-access platform and repository of systematic review data (most of which are structured). SRDR has been developed and supported by Brown University with funding from the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ). As of February 2019, data from 132 systematic reviews (with a total of >13,000 studies) across various medical and public health fields have been made publicly available through SRDR.

CONCLUSIONS AND PLAN FOR 1-HOUR SESSION

We will explore these issues raised above through a Panel Discussion. First, we will present the advantages and challenges with data sharing (10 minutes – Ian Saldanha). Then, we will describe SRDR (one tool) that is being used for systematic review data sharing and the impact that SRDR has had (10 minutes – Ian Saldanha). Three Panelists – Jessica Gurevitch, Lesley Stewart, Jeffrey Valentine, and Joseph Lau – will take 5 minutes to speak to these issues from the perspectives of ecology, education, and health (20 minutes total). After the Panelists speak, we will open the floor for discussion for 20 minutes. If appropriate, in the last 5 minutes of the open discussion, we will begin to chart out a way forward.