

NICE Knowledge Exchange Seminars

Knowledge exchange seminar series – Session on managing a committee meeting

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ABSTRACT

This study underscores the pivotal roles of committee members like the chairs and the secretariats in maximizing meeting efficiency, covering pre-meeting planning, session management, and post-meeting strategies. It accentuates streamlined evidence discussions and the challenge of ensuring committee functionality amidst differing opinions. Emphasis is placed on chairing sessions for equal participation, aligning evidence with recommendations, and post-session debriefs for addressing implementation challenges and planning subsequent meetings.

Keywords: Evidence-based discussions, Healthcare guidelines, Committee management, Committee functionality

A second knowledge exchange seminar series was organized as a part of the collaborative project between NICE International and IHOPE to develop and implement evidence-based clinical guidelines in India. This paper is the fifth in the second series of this collaboration, and further information on the other papers of the first series can be found at: <https://ihopejournalofophthalmology.com/issue/2022-1-2>

INTRODUCTION

This paper focuses on establishing the roles of the committee chair and the secretariat in managing the committee meeting and the communication between them before, during, and after the committee meeting. As committee members such as healthcare professionals and patients have limited time to attend committee meetings, it is important to ensure that committee meeting time is well spent discussing evidence and drafting recommendations. It is also crucial to ensure that committee members are supported to understand the process and methods to be followed (see paper on session 6).

BEFORE THE COMMITTEE MEETING

The chair and the secretariat aim to meet before the meeting to discuss the meeting agenda and aims of the meeting, the evidence, and possible draft recommendations. The goal of this pre-meeting is to agree on a plan of action so that committee time is not spent discussing issues that can be resolved in advance. The chair and secretariat should identify gaps in the evidence where more information may be required and identify which committee members' input can help fill this gap. This pre-meeting should take place at least one week before the committee meeting to

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allow full consideration of any new declarations of interest. This is to allow time to agree on how to manage any potential conflict of interest and to communicate with the relevant committee members.

It is important to agree on an approach to manage any disagreements among committee members which may arise. The chair and secretariat should identify any contentious issues in the evidence or potential differences of opinion between committee members. They should also agree on how they will work together to achieve consensus in the committee meeting and consider options, including voting if consensus is not possible. If voting is needed, the chair should outline the voting process (simple majority of votes of the members attending the meeting, with a quorum of a minimum of half of the committee members) to be followed, ensuring it is within the scope of the methods manual. This should cover who is a voting member of the committee and the rules on quoracy. It should also be borne in mind that the voting should be carried out anonymously. Thus, adequate planning for documenting the vote and the process used is essential.

DURING THE MEETING

During the meeting itself, the chair should begin by outlining the objectives of the meeting, the process to be followed, and asking for new declarations of interest. The chair should ensure that each committee member, including patients, is given a chance to speak and contribute to the discussion. Care should be taken to ensure one or more committee members do not dominate the discussion. Toward the end of the session, the chair should summarize the discussion, including draft recommendations, and provide an opportunity for any clarifications.

The chair should ensure the discussions consider the alignment between the evidence and the committee's own experience and their interpretation of the evidence. The discussion should also identify any gaps in the evidence and be prepared to test the recommendations against potential stakeholder comments; for example, will the recommendation make sense to all stakeholders involved, or is further detail or editing required? The chair and secretariat also ensure that the recommendations are within the agreed remit of the guideline while ensuring that they are also practical and implementable in the real world as far as can be ascertained.

AFTER THE MEETING

The chair and the secretariat should have a debrief after each committee meeting. This helps identify any implementation

issues that need to be discussed or any methodological issues raised. Planning for the next committee meeting could also start in this meeting, especially if any further evidence is needed or if any additional expert advice is required to help the committee interpret the evidence. Having this early discussion allows for additional evidence or expert testimony to be scheduled at the next meeting.

POTENTIAL CHALLENGES

Potential challenges to the smooth running of committee meetings include:

- The logistics of arranging meetings at times and intervals to suit busy healthcare professionals.
- Providing support to committee members to ensure that they understand the process to be followed and how evidence is reviewed and presented.
- Managing committee members who dominate the discussion or who don't contribute.
- Disagreement between committee members resulting in an unwillingness to reach a consensus.

Ethical approval

The Institutional Review Board approval is not required.

Declaration of patient consent

Patient's consent was not required as there are no patients in this study.

Financial support and sponsorship

Nil.

Conflicts of interest

There are no conflicts of interest.

Use of artificial intelligence (AI)-assisted technology for manuscript preparation

The authors confirm that they have used artificial intelligence (AI)-assisted technology for assisting in the writing or editing of the manuscript or image creations.

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