

PRELIMINARY DATA FROM THE NEEDS ASSESSMENT ON THE USE OF SYSTEMATIC REVIEWS IN DISASTER SETTINGS

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Purpose of the survey

- To identify the attitudes of those involved in humanitarian responses to disasters and other crises towards systematic reviews and research
- To identify their priorities for evidence
- To identify their preferences for ways to access the information

Quotes from earlier semi-structured interviews

- Poor Evidence

*“Evidence-based practice in humanitarian response is very poor. We do most things because we have been doing them year after year, we don’t do them because we have proven they are right. **Very few have been really proven...**”*

- Problems with Guidelines

*“ ... **Most of the indicators are not measurable.** And it doesn’t tell you how to measure them either. Even for the few, which are measurable, it doesn’t give any methodology...”*

Quotes...

- Weaknesses in reporting system

*“It is important to **start analysing the effectiveness of interventions, it is challenging but possible.** The problem with aid in general is that it is made by a lot of anecdotal reports. There are **more opinions than really hard data in NGO reports...**”*

- Problems with the quality of data

*“People using data from CRED sit in nice offices in London, Geneva or New York, they write their brilliant scholarly papers. They don’t understand just how **unrepresentative this information is.**”*

Survey design

- Following a formal evaluation of Evidence Aid in 2008/9 (Turner 2009)
- Discussions with people working with a variety of organisations
- A mixture of pick-list items and open questions with the ability to provide comments
- Web based
- Languages: French, English, Spanish and Arabic

Promotion of the survey

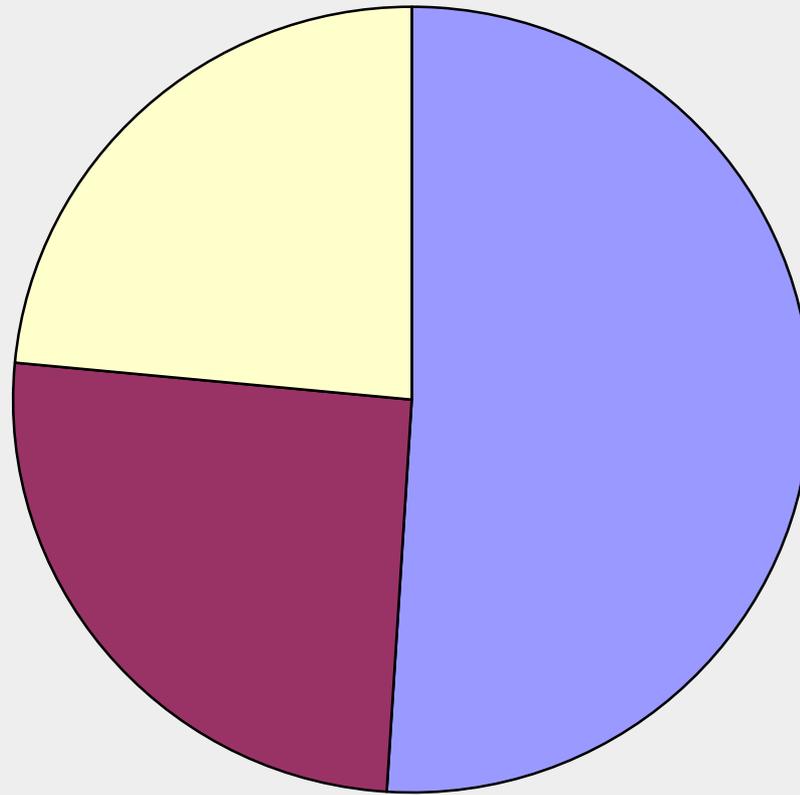
- Information sent to contacts established during discussions
- Snowballing technique
- Distribution through the information services of WHO, Cochrane Collaboration, WADEM, CGH TCD and other distribution lists
- Recommendation to circulate the survey

Suggestions for priorities

- What is the best way to achieve a comprehensive disaster database?
- Effects of targeted supplementary feeding programs
- Political management of potable water
- Mental health and psychosocial support interventions
- Evaluation to ensure greater accountability for expenditure
- Reproductive, maternal and newborn health care focus in acute emergencies (it is often not prioritized).
- Culture norms (e.g. food preservation)
- Value of various interventions in lowering mortality
- Impact of training during emergencies
- Best practices in the use of social media in disaster response (e.g. for warning and evacuation)
- Vaccination
- Logistics

Need for Reviews: Preliminary Results

Have you used systematic reviews as a source of evidence in decision-making?



YES: 51%

NO: 25.5%

NOT SURE: 23.5%

(N=51)

**If you needed to access the findings of systematic reviews,
how would you like them to be presented to you?**

- Whole review: 45.1% (23)
- Whole review plus comments from experts in the humanitarian sector: 56.9% (29)
- Review summary on its own: 21.6% (11)
- Summary and context specific information: 47.1% (24)

(N=51)

If you needed to access the findings of systematic reviews, how would you like to do this? [Options]

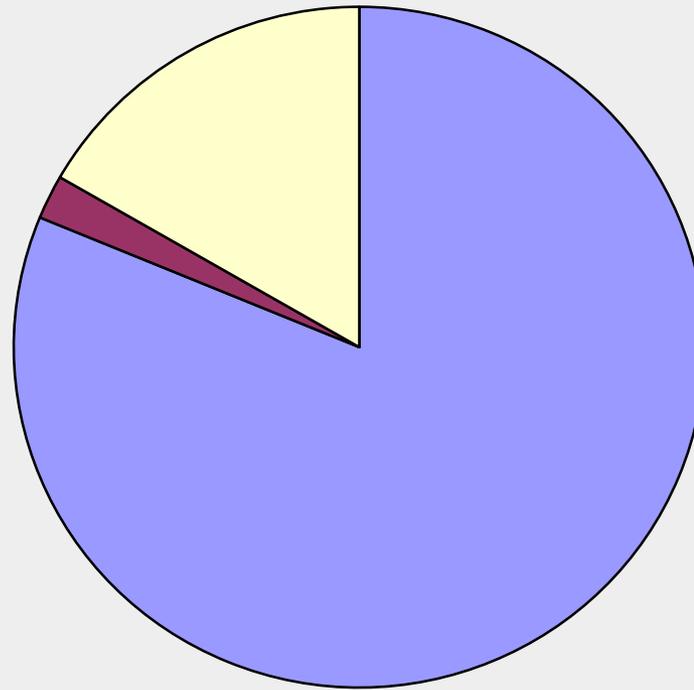
- Full systematic review online
- Summaries of systematic reviews online
- Full systematic review by email (e.g. as PDF)
- Summaries of systematic reviews by email
- Full systematic review on CD or DVD
- Summaries of systematic reviews on CD or DVD
- Full systematic review via mobile technology
- Summaries of systematic reviews via mobile technology
- Printed version of full systematic review
- Printed summaries of systematic reviews
- Other

If you needed to access the findings of systematic reviews, how would you like to do this? [Answers]

- Full systematic review online: 82.2% (37)
- Summaries of systematic reviews online: 60% (27)
- Full systematic review by email: 35.5% (16)
- Summaries of systematic reviews on CD or DVD: 6.6% (3)
- Summaries of systematic reviews via mobile technology: 8.8% (4)

Access to systematic reviews to improve responses to natural disasters

Do you think that improved access to systematic reviews could play a role in improving the response to natural disasters and other humanitarian crises?



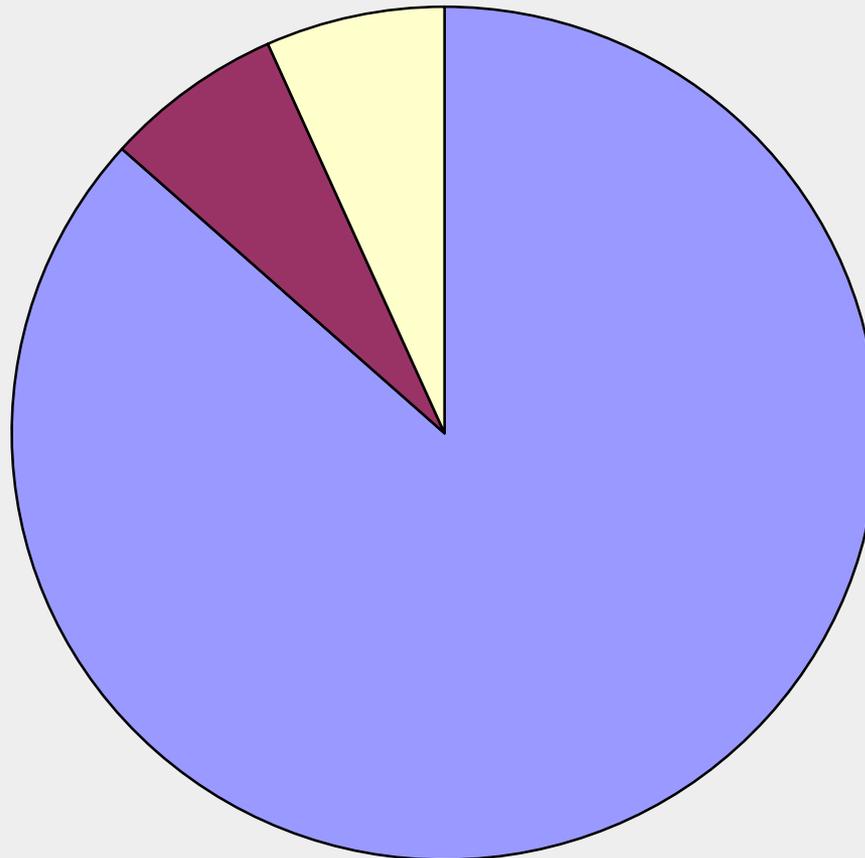
Yes: 81.3%

No: 2.1%

Not sure:
16.7%

Donors want reviews

Question to donors: would the use of systematic reviews help you to assess the likely effects of projects before providing funding to agencies?



Yes: 86.7%

No: 6.7%

I don't
know: 6.7%

(N=15)

Conclusions

- Humanitarian aid workers are aware that evidence based practice in disasters is very poor
- Humanitarian aid workers and donors need systematic reviews to improve their interventions and assess the impact of their efforts
- They want reviews, comments from experts in the field and context specific information to be accessed online or via mobile phone technology
- They have many uncertainties for which they need research evidence
- Evidence Aid should engage with aid workers to prioritise their needs on systematic reviews

Next steps for the survey

- Encourage more participants
- Comprehensive data analysis
- Key informant interviews
- Disseminate summary, interim reports
- Use the findings to inform the development of the future strategy for Evidence Aid

THANK YOU!



evidence aid

