

What are the highest priorities for research in prehospital care?

Results of a review
and consultation exercise

Research team

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Background

Prehospital care research topics should be prioritised to ensure:

- Evidence based service provision and development
- Limited funding is targeted to most pressing need

Department of Health (Peter Bradley) (2005). Taking Healthcare to the Patient: Transforming NHS Ambulance Services. DoH

Study objectives

- To identify gaps in research related to deliver of prehospital care
- To rank topics in order of priority for research

Methods

Three stage study:

1. Review of research in pre-hospital care and matching to current policy
2. Identification of research topics for prioritisation
3. Delphi consultation to prioritise areas for further research

1. Review of research and matching to current policy

- Websites and databases searched to identify:
 - UK policy and guidance published since 2000
 - Research reviews published since 2000
- Policy/guidelines grouped into themes
- Research evidence was matched to appropriate policy/guideline
- Gaps noted where a paper reported lack of evidence, no evidence or identified further research needed

2. Identification of research topics for prioritisation

- a. Results of workshop at AMBEX 2006 which identified and prioritised research topics
 - b. Research gaps identified in review of reviews
- ⇒ Combined list summarising topics for further research

3. Delphi consultation to prioritise areas for further research

- Group consultation to obtain consensus through a series of structured questionnaires
- Prehospital care experts including clinicians, practitioners, managers, academics, patients
- 3 rounds by email
 - i. Confirm/add research gaps
 - ii. Rank topics
 - iii. Review scores with option to re-score

Scores analysed using SPSS

Results

- 30 policy/guidance documents identified
- 52 research reviews identified
- Results presented in three sections:
 - o Access to prehospital care
 - Call handling and dispatch
 - The 999 Emergency response
 - o Management/operations of prehospital services
 - o Treatment in the prehospital environment
 - Alternatives to ambulance response or transport to A&E
 - Clinical interventions

- 96 research topics identified for prioritisation
- 40 people participated in the Delphi consultation

Prioritisation results

- 1st Development of performance measures other than response times for use in performance management, audit and research

Other highly ranked priorities

- Management of stroke, cardiac conditions, children and self harm
- Development of patient focused clinical outcome measures
- Safety, costs and benefits of alternatives to A&E treatment
- Patient information sharing across care providers
- Managing 999 call handling and dispatch

Implications

- Priorities reflect three key issues
 - Measuring activity to benefit patients and more accurately reflect prehospital care
 - Development of safe non-A&E care
 - Providing appropriate prehospital clinical care

Conclusions

- Delphi consultation is a suitable method for building consensus among experts
 - Top research priority consistently prioritised
 - List of research topics confirmed in preliminary round
- Results provide robust foundation to build a programme of future research

Recommendations

- Results should inform strategy for commissioning and undertaking prehospital research
- Identify performance measures other than response times
- Develop research commissioning briefs for topics prioritised in this review and Delphi consultation

Thank you

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