Introduction to the Evidence-Based Information Group and report on activities to date

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Introduction

The idea of creating an Evidence-Based Information SIG (EBI-SIG) saw the light at EAHIL 2018 in Cardiff. The idea was further developed by Marshall Dozier, Alicia Fátima-Gómez, Krizia Tuand and Thomas Vandendriessche and the SIG was finally formed after an open meeting of all interested EAHIL members at the 2019 EAHIL Workshop in Basel. The main aim of the group is to bring together and connect all EAHIL members who are interested and want to improve the quality of systematic reviews and other evidence-based products. We aim to do this by supporting five main areas of activity:

1. to support knowledge exchange by providing a space to discuss problems and share information, experiences and best practice;

2. to provide and support continuing professional development for health librarians and researchers on topics related to systematic reviews and other evidence-based products;

3. to appeal to the publishers and editors of medical journals to consider the quality of systematic reviews and include better guidelines about methodological and reporting issues, also to advocate for the inclusion of biomedical librarians as editors in the peer-review process;

4. to develop strategies to improve the visibility of systematic reviews and other evidence-based products;

5. to connect with other interest groups or projects and support the dissemination of international standards.

After an open call of the EAHIL membership for nominations to co-chair and co-secretary posts, the elections of Jane Falconer and Thomas Vandendriessche as co-chairs and Krizia Tuand as secretary were made unopposed. Shona Kirtley joined as co-secretary in 2021.

The co-chairs agreed to encourage EBI-SIG members to become involved by putting out a call for relevant projects. The projects would be led by a SIG member, with support from the co-chairs. The projects could be on any topic relevant to the aims of the SIG.

The Evidence-Based Information SIG currently has 249 members.

Please consult the EBI-SIG webpage for more information http://eahil.eu/sig-2/evidence-based-information-group/.

NEWS FROM EAHIL SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP

Meeting with sister organisations, 2 September 2020 (online via Zoom)

An introductory meeting was arranged with representatives of the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA), the Australian Library & Information Association (ALIA), the Canadian Health Libraries Association (CHLA), the Association for Health Information and Libraries in Africa (AHILA) and the Medical Library Association (MLA). Apologies were received from representatives of AHILA and MLA.

The meeting started with introductions of individuals and organisations and this was followed by an open discussion of potential areas for collaboration.

Peer-review of systematic search strategies

The discussion started with the joint letter to the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors, calling for journal editors to be proactive in using the skills of information professionals for methodological peer-review (1). Unfortunately, none of the attending signatories had received any feedback.

It was agreed that peer-review of search strategies could have potential to be an area of collaboration through sharing support, resources and skills development opportunities.

Advocating for health information professional skills

Several attendees shared details of local efforts to advocate for further acknowledgement of information professional's skills and of the skills required of a systematic searcher.

The meeting ended with an agreement to continue the meetings and work together on common issues.

EBI-SIG meeting, 17 November 2020, 17th EAHIL Conference, Łódz, Poland (online via Zoom)

The first EBI-SIG meeting attracted 21 attendees as well as the EBI-SIG co-chairs and secretary.

As this was the first meeting of the group, time was allocated to allow each attendee to give a brief summary of their relevant experience and reason for interest in the EBI-SIG.

Jane Falconer provided a summary of the sister organisations meeting.

The leads of two SIG projects gave an overview of their project and progress to date. These were:

1. peer reviewing search strategies for journals, Krizia Tuand. This project links to a number of the SIG aims and focuses on peer-review of search strategies upon submission to a journal;

2. reference database of relevant methodology articles, Marshall Dozier. This project aims to provide a shared database of relevant articles on systematic search methodology.

A call was also put out for more volunteers to work on these projects or to put forward other areas of work.

EBI-SIG meeting, 6 July 2021, EAHIL Virtual Workshop, Istanbul, Turkey (online via Zoom)

The second EBI-SIG meeting attracted 31 attendees, including the co-chair Thomas Vandendriessche and the secretary Krizia Tuand. Jane Falconer (co-chair) was excused.

Time was taken to give an overview of the listed SIG projects. Although there hadn't been much progress, due to COVID-19, there was a lot of enthusiasm and input by the attendees. The main aim for the upcoming year

is to reboot the projects and start hosting webinars and journal clubs with regular intervals, linked to these SIG projects. These events will be communicated via the SIG mailing list.

You can find some pitched ideas in the SIG meeting minutes.

Furthermore, it was mentioned to keep an eye out for an updated Cochrane handbook and supplement and for the start-up of a search strategy repository, sponsored by CABI (https://searchrxiv.org/).

Lastly, a call was made that we as professionals should spread more light on the things we're doing during this pandemic and take these circumstances as a motor to raise awareness on evidence-based information.

EBI-SIG project meeting, 19 October 2021 (online via Zoom)

This project meeting was arranged to bring all EBI-SIG project leads and contributors together to provide updates on each project and to start to move the projects forward. Seven projects had been previously initiated and an update was provided on each:

Project 1 - Mapping journal requirements for systematic reviews;

Project 2 - Reference database on articles about systematic search methods;

Project 3 - Make a list of people for peer-reviewing search strategies for journals. And/or coordinate the joining of existing lists. Combined with training for peer-review;

Project 4 - Worldwide database for search strategies (Which ones exist, is there need for extra or centralisation?);

Project 5 - Visibility of evidence-based reports (HTA reports, commissioned reports, etc.);

Project 6 - Collaboration and sharing: Contact international sister organisations and other networks and map opportunities;

Project 7 - Tools in R for health libraries.

The projects are all at varying stages, with some having made substantial progress and others still at an early stage or not yet having begun. A number of excellent ideas were proposed to assist in moving projects forward or to redefine the initial focus or objectives of projects to enable them to get underway.

The general consensus was that more leads and contributors are required to help to drive the projects forward. Any member of the SIG can be involved so please do consider volunteering for a project! Details of the current projects list and the project leads are on the SIG webpage.

REFERENCE

1. Traditi LK. MLA recommends seeking information specialists as peer reviewers for knowledge synthesis publications. MLA Connect. 10 June 2020. Available from:
https://www.mlanet.org/p/cm/ld/fid=1122&&blogaid=3029   [Accessed 5 November 2021]