

Quality and reporting standards, resources, training materials and information for realist evaluation: the RAMESES II project

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Declared competing interests of authors: Geoff Wong is a member of the National Institute for Health Research Health Technology Assessment programme Primary Care Panel, and is a panel member of the Health and Safety Executive External Peer Review Panel Evaluation Governance Group. During the course of the project Gill Westhorp worked as a consultant and consulting academic undertaking realist evaluations and reviews, and provided some capacity building and some PhD supervision on a commercial basis. These activities were not undertaken under the auspices of this project.

Published October 2017

DOI: 10.3310/hsdr05280

Plain English summary

The RAMESES II project

Health Services and Delivery Research 2017; Vol. 5: No. 28

DOI: 10.3310/hsdr05280

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Plain English summary

Realist evaluation is used to answer questions such as ‘what works for whom, in what circumstances, how and why?’ It is an approach to evaluating interventions or programmes in health and other fields. When we started this project, there were no standards setting out how to judge if realist evaluations were of high quality – something we have called quality standards. Nor did any standards exist to guide evaluators on how best to write up their evaluations – we have called these reporting standards. Although there were some resources and training materials for realist evaluation, more were needed that showed evaluators in detail how to rigorously undertake certain parts of an evaluation.

In this project, we developed quality and reporting standards and resources and training materials for realist evaluations. We used a range of methods (e.g. a review of the literature and a structured consensus-building process called a Delphi panel) to help us choose and agree on what should be in the standards and training materials. We used a pre-existing e-mail list for additional input. We asked researchers we worked with on realist evaluations for their comments, and we got feedback from researchers we trained in workshops or presented to at conferences. We analysed and wove together all this information to produce quality and reporting standards and resources and training materials. We needed to prioritise certain parts of the project as a result of its ambitious nature and the workload this created. We have made all of our project’s outputs freely available online (www.ramesesproject.org).

Health Services and Delivery Research

ISSN 2050-4349 (Print)

ISSN 2050-4357 (Online)

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Editorial contact: journals.library@nihr.ac.uk

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This report

The research reported in this issue of the journal was funded by the HS&DR programme or one of its preceding programmes as project number 14/19/19. The contractual start date was in March 2015. The final report began editorial review in March 2017 and was accepted for publication in July 2017. The authors have been wholly responsible for all data collection, analysis and interpretation, and for writing up their work. The HS&DR editors and production house have tried to ensure the accuracy of the authors' report and would like to thank the reviewers for their constructive comments on the final report document. However, they do not accept liability for damages or losses arising from material published in this report.

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