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

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Plain English summary

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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).
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This report

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