

Can a rapid prioritisation process be used to identify health research priorities in low and middle income countries (LMICs)?

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1. Aim:

Within the NIHR Breathe Well programme, the University of Birmingham is collaborating with four LMICs (Brazil, China, Georgia, FYR Macedonia) to develop research capacity in COPD care. A key element of this work was to develop a process for identifying health research priorities in each country.

2. Method:

A novel, rapid prioritisation process was developed, informed by established approaches and discussion with investigators. Each country convened a stakeholder group of patients, healthcare professionals and policy makers. Evidence briefs relating to 10 pre-specified potential research studies were sent to participants before the prioritisation meeting. Prioritisation meetings included facilitated discussions for each participant group; each study was discussed for 15-20 mins and rated on a 3-point scale of importance. Participants subsequently ranked all studies in order of priority. Results were compared across type of participant and will be combined with those from the country's research team and programme co-investigators, to inform selection of future research studies.

3. Results:

This abstract presents interim data from two countries; complete data will be presented at the conference. Research teams in each country held prioritisation meetings October-December 2017. The highest priority studies in both countries related to screening test strategies and clinical education for primary care staff. Other prioritised studies in China related to smoking cessation and treatment for newly case-found COPD patients, whereas Brazilian participants also ranked pulmonary rehabilitation and quality COPD management highly.

4. Conclusion:

The meetings were successful and the initiative was well-received by all stakeholders. The methods allowed priority research areas to be identified in each country. Initial findings suggest that our approach offers a feasible way of assessing health research priorities in LMICs.

Declaration of Interest

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