# The Explanation and Elaboration Document for the Standards for Rapid Evaluation and Appraisal Methods (STREAM)

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STREAM
Standards for Rapid Evaluation and Appraisal Methods

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# THE PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

This explanation and elaboration (E&E) document has been designed to support the use of the Standards for Rapid Evaluation and Appraisal Methods (STREAM) that were developed in July 2023. This document presents the 38 statements, divided across eight domains:



This document provides examples of clearly reported standard items based on published examples that were identified from a systematic review of rapid evaluation and appraisal studies, and additional literature.

Additionally, this document includes explanations of the purpose of and the justification of each statement included in the standards. The format of this document has been informed by previously developed E&E documents (Ogrinc et al., n.d.; Vandenbroucke et al., 2007).

# THE USE OF STREAM

- The document has been designed to support evaluators and researchers in the reporting of their rapid evaluation and rapid appraisal studies for publication or reports.
- This document can also be used to guide evaluators and researchers on deciding on the methods and approaches to implement in their rapid evaluation and rapid appraisal studies.
- Additionally, the use of STREAM can be used to critically appraise the rigour of previous studies, taking into consideration that some of the reporting guidelines may need to be adapted to specific study contexts.

# STUDY DESIGN

a. Define the purpose, aim or research/ evaluation questions and planned deliverables guiding the study.

b. Provide a clear description of the intervention, programme or service being evaluated.

c. Describe any preliminary research, scoping studies or piloting methods to inform the study design.

d. Describe any theoretical frameworks or models used to guide the study design (or programme theories or theories of change in the case of rapid evaluations).

e. Indicate any relevant reporting guidelines used throughout the study.

f. If Patient and Public Involvement and Engagement (PPIE), community participation or other stakeholder advisory input was used to inform the design and implementation of the study, or to address equality, diversity and inclusion, share a description of their input.

g. Confirm if a brief protocol or proposal was developed and report any changes made. If possible, share links to these documents.

h. Share a description of the proposed duration of the study, and if any changes occurred, confirm the actual duration of the study including the data collection and data analysis periods.

i. Provide a clear description of the sampling approach, and the groups selected for the study, and explain why these approaches were taken. Clearly state if any groups or sites were not included in the study.

j. Adhere to good practices linked to informed consent, share a description of the process used for informed consent and recruitment of study participants.

## 1. STUDY DESIGN

**Statement:**

**a) Define the purpose, aim or research/ evaluation questions and planned deliverables guiding the study.**

**Example:**

1. *"The aim of this study was to assess the attitude towards ZIKV infection and its associated explanatory variables among doctors in Aceh, Indonesia, to determine the appropriate target group(s) for a Zika prevention program."* (Harapan et al., 2018)
2. *"We sought to answer the following research questions: 1. How informed is the paralysis community (including both PWP and family members/caregivers) about the COVID-19 vaccine? 2. Do individuals with paralysis plan to seek COVID-19 vaccination, and/or how many among the paralysis community are vaccinated? 3. What concerns and/or hesitations do members of the paralysis community have about the COVID-19 vaccine?"* (Forber-Pratt et al., 2022)

**Explanation:**

The aim of the study should clearly explain the purpose of the study and what the study has set out to achieve. This can include a broad aim or it could include more specific research questions that the study will address.

**Statement:**

**b) Provide a clear description of the intervention, programme or service being evaluated.**

**Example:**

1. *"A rapid appraisal was conducted on Liuyang's mental health policy and plan"… "Liuyang is the first municipality in Hunan Province to release municipal mental health policy and plan, entitled "the Mid- and Long-term Development Plan for Mental Health in Liuyang Municipality" and "the Plan of Mental Health Work in Liuyang Municipality" (hereinafter referred to as Liuyang Policy and Liuyang Plan respectively). The two documents (translated full texts in Additional file 1: Appendixs 1, 2) have provided guidance for local mental health development from 2007 to 2017. Four main objectives of Liuyang Policy and Liuyang Plan include: (i) establishing leadership and coordination mechanism for mental health work, (ii) constructing a three-level network of mental health services, (iii) PWP management and intervention, and (iv) improving of the public's awareness and knowledge of mental health."* (Zhou et al., 2019)
2. *"This study aimed to evaluate patient experiences of, and engagement with, remote home monitoring models for COVID-19"…"formal and informal support patients received as part of COVID-19 remote home monitoring services in England, UK (COVID Oximetry@home and virtual wards models)."* (Walton et al., 2022)

**Explanation:**

It is important to provide a clear description of what is being evaluated. This can help readers who may be evaluating similar programmes or services identify possible approaches to evaluation. It can also provide more information on the context where the evaluation was carried out, which can justify why certain approaches may have been used.

**Statement:**

**c) Describe any preliminary research, scoping studies or piloting methods to inform the study design.**

Example:

1. *"The literature review and consultations with key stakeholders identified that the SM landscape in Viet Nam is prolific with a number of government and nongovernment organisations (NGOs) implementing activities since the first family planning program was initiated in the country in 1963"… "SSI discussion agenda was developed to cover a range of key issues emanating from the literature review and consultations with NIN and UNICEF program managers."* (Turk et al., 2017)
2. *"These questions were informed by prior research on barriers to care for women with earlier stage breast cancer, a literature review conducted for this study, and feedback from key stakeholders on metastatic breast cancer."* (Shimkhada et al., 2021)

**Explanation**:

The research and evaluation teams should describe any preliminary research that was carried out to inform the design of the rapid appraisal or rapid evaluation. This could include a scoping study, review of the published evidence, exploratory research or the piloting of data collection methods.

**Statement:**

**d) Describe any theoretical frameworks or models used to guide the study design (or programme theories or theories of change in the case of rapid evaluations).**

**Example:**

1. *"While an exhaustive review of implementation theory is beyond the scope of this manuscript, it is useful to briefly describe some of the contemporary theoretical frameworks that informed our approach to this study. Davis' Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) is an extension of Ajzen and Fishbein's Theory of Reasoned Action and has been widely used to describe users' acceptance and adoption of technology in a wide array of disciplines, including healthcare. The model states that an individual's predilection to use a technology has two determinants: perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness."* (Wright et al., 2017)
2. *"Thus, we used a health behavior theory framework, the Theory of Planned Behavior, to understand the determinants of seeking emergency cardiovascular care during the COVID-19 pandemic which, in turn, informed public health material development"… "We developed an interview guide based on the Theory of Planned Behavior to assess stroke and AMI perceptions during COVID-19."* (Robles et al., 2021)

**Explanation:**

Theoretical frameworks and models can inform the research questions guiding a rapid study, the data collection instruments and the data analysis approach. In the case of rapid evaluations, programme theories, theories of change and logic models can be used to describe the main components of interventions, their expected outcomes and the mechanisms for change (the assumptions made by designers regarding how the components of the intervention will lead to the expected outcomes) (Davidoff et al., 2015).

**Statement:**

**e) Indicate any relevant reporting guidelines used throughout the study.**

**Example:**

1. *"We referred to the COREQ checklist to facilitate the reporting of this qualitative research." (Rinehart et al., 2023)*

**Explanation:**

A large number of reporting guidelines exist in the field of research and evaluation, and, more specifically, STREAM now exists for rapid evaluations and rapid appraisals. These reporting guidelines are useful to suggest methods, techniques and approaches that can be used when designing and implementing the study.

**Statement:**

**f) If Patient and Public Involvement and Engagement (PPIE), community participation or other stakeholder advisory input was used to inform the design and implementation of the study, or to address equality, diversity and inclusion, share a description of their input.**

**Example:**

1. *"The survey and interview guide were piloted with the members of the study public patient involvement (PPI) group and the general public, through the following activities: (a) workshop with the PPI group, (b) pilot interview with one PPI member and (c) survey reviewed by the PPI member and members of the public. Suggested amendments relating to accessibility and wording of questions were incorporated before use."* (Walton et al., 2022)

2. *"The involvement of pertinent stakeholders in material design and testing has been shown to lead to more culturally appropriate and effective communication tools. As such, input from community-based nutrition volunteers suggested that more images of locally available wild foods be made available for nutrition promotion."* (Weiss et al., 2016)

**Explanation:**

The involvement of patients and members of the public can help researchers and evaluators to see how the study and its findings could be made more relevant to their interests and needs. (Blackburn et al., 2018)

**Statement:**

**g) Confirm if a brief protocol or proposal was developed that outlines the research/ evaluation questions, study design, methods of data collection, PPIE involvement, analysis plans, strategy to disseminate findings including potential audience, and provision of guidance on how to use data. If possible, share links to these documents. Report any changes made in the study protocol and the reason why these changes were made.**

**Example:**

1. *"The protocol was reviewed and approved by the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM) and the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health ethics review boards."* (Theiss-Nyland et al., 2016)

2. *"A brief proposal was prepared outlining key study steps and submitted to the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Bangladesh and received formal approval."* (Rahman et al., 2020)

**Explanation:**

Protocols and proposals are important guides for researchers and evaluation teams as the study is ongoing. These documents can also be useful when working with study commissioners to ensure there are clear and agreed expectations related to the study scope and what it can achieve. Any deviations from the protocol and the justification for these changes should be reported.

**Statement:**

**h) Share a description of the proposed duration of the study, and if any changes occurred, confirm the actual duration of the study, including the data collection and data analysis periods.**

**Example:**

1. *"We only had five months within which to conduct site visits, analyze data, and report results."* (Ash et al., 2016)
2. *"The entire process, from conducting the first interview to the groups and write-up of the final synopsis took one month, reflecting the utility of the RAP for these purposes."* (Solomon et al., 2007)

**Explanation:**

Clear reporting in terms of study timeframes and how long different research stages took is particularly important in the field of rapid research and evaluation as it allows the readers to understand the time pressures the research team may have been under to conduct data collection and analysis. These time pressures may explain why certain approaches were used in the study, such as approaches to gaining ethical approval, approaches to recruitment and rapid approaches for data collection and analysis.

**Statement:**

**i) Provide a clear description of the sampling approach, and the groups selected for the study, and explain why these approaches were taken. Clearly state if any groups or sites were not included in the study.**

**Example:**

1. *"Street intercepts and snowball sampling techniques were used to identify drug using MSM, for key informant (KI) or focus group (FG) interviews in these areas."* (Parry et al., 2008)
2. *"Nominated sampling was used to recruit participants who were "in" the community and/or were knowledgeable about IDU issues. To ensure that hard to access participants were found, targeted sampling was used. This aims to find people in specific locations, such as a housing complex or alleyways where drug use is occurring. Targeted sampling was facilitated by asking participating IDUs to nominate peers to take part in the study."* (Stajduhar et al., 2004)

**Explanation:**

It is well known that rapid studies can often lead to limited time for recruitment, which can then lead to small sample sizes or sampling approaches that might favour more accessible study participants (Johnson & Vindrola-Padros, 2017). It is important to include a detailed description of the sampling approach used in the study and the rationale for including and excluding particular groups. A sampling brief or framework could be an easy way to report the groups of participants who were considered relevant for the study.

**Statement:**

**j) Adhere to good practices linked to informed consent, share a description of the process used for informed consent and recruitment of study participants.**

**Example:**

1. *"Verbal informed consent was obtained from all participants by reading a consent form in a language understood to the participant outlining: the purpose of the assessment; the use of the results; the confidentiality of the interviews; and the voluntary nature of the interviewees' involvement." (Ezard et al., 2011)*
2. *"All participants consented using an online or paper based consent form." (Mullane et al., 2019)*

**Explanation:**

It is essential that study participants fully understand the aims of the study, what participation will entail, and the benefits and risks of taking part in the study. The informed consent process used in the study, whether this is verbal or written, should be reported.

# EVALUATION OR RESEARCH TEAM

a. Provide a clear description and/or rationale of the team size (including any changes over time).

b. Describe the researcher's/ evaluator's relationship with (whether they have had previous engagement with the site) and in proximity to the research/ evaluation site. Including whether research/ evaluation is conducted virtually or face-to-face, or whether the researcher/evaluator is based in the area of the data collection.

c. Describe the levels of experience of team members and their backgrounds (including if any team members were part of the community, patient representatives or members of the public).

d. Indicate if team members received any training in rapid research/ evaluation methods.

e. Describe the roles and responsibilities of team members in this project and why the team was designed in this way.

f. If researchers/ evaluators reflected on how their background and experiences may have affected their data collection, analysis and interpretation, please describe this process (reflexivity).

## 2. EVALUATION OR RESEARCH TEAM

**Statement:**

a) **Provide a clear description and/or rationale of the team size (including any changes over time).**

**Example:**

1. *"The three teams of approximately 4 reviewers each comprising international, and national technical advisors were supported by district teams of another 3-4 local support staff (6-8 field staff in total for each team) to facilitate meetings, conduct translating duties and provide insights into the project roll-out."* (Kamineni et al., 2011)

2. *"Deploying a diverse collaborative team allows investigators to accomplish several interrelated goals, including the following: The collection of useful social and cultural data is expedited. Sending a group of fieldworkers to collect data ensures that a sufficient amount of information will be gathered in a relatively short amount of time, compared with the work of a single researcher. The interdisciplinary nature of the team provides a certain intrinsic level of expertise in a variety of areas so that the research questions are always building on existing knowledge. This, too, quickens the pace of data collection. The inclusion of local residents into the research team can facilitate the establishment of trust and rapport so essential in the collection of data. The inclusion of local people on the research team provides a way to identify important conceptual categories before finalizing the design of data collection instruments. The mixture of team members by gender, age, and discipline is a way to access multiple points of view within the study population. The collaborative investigative team for this project was chosen with emphasis on diversity with regard to age, gender, ethnicity, and area of specialization, as well as Spanish language skills. We recognized that we would be highly reliant on native interpreters not only for linguistic translation, but also for insights into social and cultural nuances to which we might otherwise be blind. Interpreters for this project were recruited through the Department of Linguistics at the Universidad Mayor de San Andres in La Paz. The characteristics of the collaborative data collection team, including our interpreters, are shown in Table 1 (team size and gender). Only a single pediatric emergency doctor was recruited to the team to maximize team diversity and thus the potential diversity of perspectives in interpreting the data."* (Chin et al., 2004)

**Explanation:**

Teams of researchers and evaluators can increase the speed of studies as team members can divide study tasks between each other, carry out data collection and analysis in parallel and assist with the interpretation of findings. Teams can also be created strategically, combing researchers from different disciplines/backgrounds and with different levels of experience. It would be helpful for readers to understand how many team members were needed to deliver a specific study, how data collection and analysis were organised across members of the team and if any changes needed to be made throughout the study.

**Statement:**

**b) Describe the researcher's/ evaluator's relationship with (whether they have had previous engagement with the site) and in proximity to the research/ evaluation site. Including whether research/ evaluation is conducted virtually or face-to-face, or whether the researcher/evaluator is based in the area of the data collection.**

**Example:**

1. *"All but three interviews were conducted face to face, either at the participant's workplace or alternative community venues between 23 May and July 2018. The other three interviews were done over the phone."* (Jumbe et al., 2021)
2. *"Additionally, the data collection including interviews was carried out by both external and local experts to balance the views and to provide systematic, robust, contextual understanding."* (Hanvoravongchai et al., 2010)

**Explanation:**

The researcher's or evaluator's relationship to a study site can affect the study findings and it is, therefore, useful to include this information in the reporting of a study. If a researcher or evaluator has had previous engagement with or is based in the site, they may have a greater understanding of the contextual factors that affect the study site and its participants, it may also make data collection easier and cheaper without having to travel long distances. Close relationships with a study site and interview participants could also lead to bias as the researcher might take certain elements for granted or participants might share different information than they would with an external research or evaluation team. Similarly, whether or not data collection was carried out face-to-face or virtually may also influence the data that were collected in the study.

**Statement:**

**c) Describe the levels of experience of team members and their backgrounds (including if any team members were part of the community, patient representatives or members of the public).**

**Example:**

1. *"These interviews were conducted by experienced social scientists with background training in Public Health in complex emergency situations."* (Atuyambe et al., 2011)
2. *"We recruited a field team that included ethnographers, cultural guides (i.e., representatives of the cultural group being studied who assist the ethnographer in gaining access to participants and in understanding the cultural context; we required our cultural guides to be community residents, JRSHC patients, and prominent community activists), and a multidisciplinary team of family physicians, psychologists, and advanced practice nurses who worked at the clinic."* (Brown et al., 2008)

**Explanation:**

It is important to report the backgrounds and levels of experience of team members to understand how these might have shaped the design and implementation of the rapid appraisals and rapid evaluations. This also includes indicating if any community or lay members were included as part of the research or evaluation team and the types of knowledge/insight they provided.

**Statement:**

**d) Indicate if team members received any training in rapid research/ evaluation methods.**

**Example:**

1. *"Our multidisciplinary team of nine occupational health experts and informaticians from four different U.S. locations convened in Portland, for three days of training and planning. The training had RAP as its focus since some team members were familiar with ethnographic techniques but not with RAP in particular."* (Ash et al., 2016)
2. *"The collaborative research team was trained in RAP tools of data collection and analysis in 2 orientation sessions."* (Chin et al., 2004)

**Explanation:**

It is important to report if any members of the team have undergone training in rapid research and rapid evaluation approaches and methods. If the training has been on specific approaches or research stages, then this should also be stated.

**Statement:**

**e) Describe the roles and responsibilities of team members in this project and why the team was designed in this way.**

**Example:**

1. *"Research assistants conducted KI interviews in pairs. This helped to ensure that one RA had ample time to engage the KI while the other took notes. All KIs were audio taped and transcribed thereafter."* (Atuyambe et al., 2011)
2. *"Interviewing was done in pairs with one person serving as the lead interviewer and the second person serving as primary note taker and "quality control". The latter role included feedback to the lead interviewer as to their rapport with the participant, their use of non-leading interviewing methods, and their use of probes to fully explore the locally-described psychosocial constructs. Members of each team could alternate their roles or not, according to their preference."* (Betancourt et al., 2009)

**Explanation:**

The research and evaluation team should describe the team, their roles and responsibilities and if any factors were taken into consideration to design the team. For instance, members of the team could have been organised to carry out data collection and analysis together, cross-checking each other's work or work in pairs to cover for each other during leave.

**Statement:**

**f) If researchers/ evaluators reflected on how their background and experiences may have affected their data collection, analysis and interpretation, please describe this process (reflexivity).**

**Example:**

1. *"The team convened throughout the day between all formal data collection periods to reflect on initial impressions, retune interview questions, and identify additional opportunities for data collection and points for clarification. This team approach involved continual dialogue between researchers and reflection helped to assure consistency, validity, and completeness in data collection."* (Holdsworth et al., 2020)
2. *"The team's varied topical and qualitative methodological expertise resulted in a range of interpretations and reflection on the data through a variety of perspectives."… "researchers wrote field notes after each interview to record contextual data and aid reflexive thinking."* (Jumbe et al., 2021)

**Explanation:**

Research and evaluation teams should include reflections on how their background and life experiences might have shaped the research process as well as how their presence in their research sites could have impacted on the views and practices of research participants and the implementation of the intervention (Rankl et al., 2021).

# DATA COLLECTION

a. Cleary describe the data collection methods used throughout the study including any rapid methods, justify why these were selected and how they were implemented.

b. If there was any translation of materials, or if data was collected in another language, share the methods that were used to ensure that conceptual equivalence and cultural validity was achieved.

c. Provide information on any approaches, processes or practices used to ensure quality in data collection.

d. Provide information on any approaches, processes or practices used to ensure consistency in the methods of data collection across team members.

e. If data collection and analysis were carried out in parallel, describe the approaches, processes or practices used to facilitate this.

## 3. DATA COLLECTION

**Statement:**

**a) Cleary describe the data collection methods used throughout the study including any rapid methods, justify why these were selected and how they were implemented.**

**Example:**

1. *"We fortunately had a large enough team of trained researchers so that some visits by sub-teams could take place at the same time."* (Ash et al., 2016)
2. *"Within the RAP, researchers immersed into the community for 2 days in total and collected data in a concise and time-efficient way."…"We conducted interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs) with Roma community members (CMs), healthcare professionals (HPs) serving the population and key informants (KIs). Observations of households and clinical consultations were additionally conducted for data triangulation."… "Therefore, during the RAP, we decided to use the obtained questionnaires for data triangulation rather than analyse them separately."… "Debriefings with the research team occurred after each activity to allow further adjustments."* (Anastasaki et al., 2022)

**Explanation:**

The research and evaluation teams should clearly describe the methods for data collection used in the rapid appraisal and rapid evaluation. This includes a description of any rapid approaches that might have been used or research stages that might have been compressed in terms of timescales.

**Statement:**

**b) If there was any translation of materials, or if data were collected in another language, share the methods that were used to ensure that conceptual equivalence and cultural validity was achieved.**

**Example:**

1. *"We recognized that we would be highly reliant on native interpreters not only for linguistic translation, but also for insights into social and cultural nuances to which we might otherwise be blind."* (Chin et al., 2004)
2. *"An 'emic' view was obtained by ensuring that all interactions were held in Hindi and that investigators were familiar with the local dialect customs and culture."... "Topic guides and interview schedules were translated to Hindi and Urdu and back translated to English."* (Dasgupta et al., 2008)

**Explanation:**

Research and evaluation teams should report if they had multilingual researchers, interpreters or informal translators helping with data collection or if any sections of the dataset were translated after data collection was complete. If conceptual equivalence or cultural validity were assessed, the methods used should be clearly reported.

**Statement:**

**c) Provide information on any approaches, processes or practices used to ensure quality in data collection.**

**Example:**

1. *"During data collection phase debrief meetings were held at the end of each day to ensure good quality data."* (Atuyambe et al., 2011)
2. *"To ensure validity and reliability of our instruments, we first sent the interview guides to some people and experts for pre-testing."* (Chilanga et al., 2022)

**Explanation:**

Research and evaluation teams should report if they used any strategies to maintain quality during data collection. Some examples of these strategies could be training the data collectors on how to use the methods for data collection, having discussions with the data collectors after they have practiced collection to ensure they have been doing it consistently, and piloting the use of the data collection tools to ensure they work as expected in the field.

**Statement:**

**d) Provide information on any approaches, processes or practices used to ensure consistency in the methods of data collection across team members.**

**Example:**

1. *"Reliability was assured through the training of the observers until there was over 90% inter-rater reliability for at least two joint observations consecutively between observers. Detailed observation rules and a definition list were developed. Data recording sheets were collected daily after completion of fieldwork and checked by local supervisors. Any discrepancies were immediately discussed with the field team."… "data collection was maximised through centralised training, standardisation of operating procedures, central data entry".* (Chopra & Rollins, 2008)
2. *"The team convened throughout the day between all formal data collection periods to reflect on initial impressions, retune interview questions, and identify additional opportunities for data collection and points for clarification. This team approach involved continual dialogue between researchers and reflection helped to assure consistency, validity, and completeness in data collection."* (Holdsworth et al., 2020)

**Explanation:**

One of the key approaches to speeding up data collection is to rely on team-based approaches where team members can conduct data collection in parallel, covering more ground (more study sites, study participants, etc.). However, when working with teams of data collectors, challenges arise when trying to maintain consistency. Research and evaluation teams should report any strategies used to maintain consistency. Some examples of these strategies could be using data collection guides or schedules, training team members on the use of the data collection instruments or having a team member act in a cross-checker role to ensure consistency across all members of the team.

**Statement:**

**e) If data collection and analysis were carried out in parallel, describe the approaches, processes or practices used to facilitate this.**

**Example:**

1. *"Data collection and analysis occurred simultaneously"… "This simultaneous approach allowed the researchers to effectively identify when data saturation was reached, and data collection should stop."* (Jumbe et al., 2021)
2. *"Data analysis of the interview transcripts was carried out in parallel with data collection in order to continuously monitor emerging themes and identify areas for further exploration."* (Dainty & Kiran, 2020)

**Explanation:**

Research and evaluation teams should describe the approaches used to carry out data collection and analysis in parallel. This description could include the use of any templates used to facilitate analysis as the study is ongoing (i.e. RREAL sheets – a resource that allows numerous team members to input preliminary findings into a table separated by key themes), frequent team meetings to discuss preliminary findings and to develop interpretations and approaches for data reduction or synthesis (Vindrola-Padros et al., 2022).

# DATA ANALYSIS

a. Clearly describe the methods that were used to analyse data. If different layers of analysis were carried out in parallel (i.e., rapid analysis and more in-depth analysis), describe the processes used to facilitate this.

b. Provide information on any approaches, processes or practices used to ensure quality in data analysis.

c. Provide information on any approaches, processes or practices used to ensure consistency in the methods of data analysis across team members.

d. If relevant, provide a clear description of the type of data triangulation that was used and how triangulation was implemented.

e. Confirm if any findings were shared with stakeholders as the study was ongoing, report on what was shared, if feedback was received, and whether the feedback was used to make changes to the study design.

## 4. DATA ANALYSIS

**Statement:**

**a) Clearly describe the methods that were used to analyse data. If different layers of analysis were carried out in parallel (i.e., rapid analysis and more in-depth analysis), describe the approaches, processes or practices used to facilitate this.**

**Example:**

1. *"Both rapid and in-depth techniques were used to complete thematic analysis."… "We analysed FGDs and KIIs as a single dataset given that the same type of information was collected regardless of interview type. We applied a two-step analysis process. CRAs held daily debriefing sessions in which they manually categorized information by reviewing the incoming audio recording and interviewer notes into binary matrices (truth tables) to arrive at a snap shot of recurrent themes or concepts for each interview guide item. After all data collection and daily debriefing matrices were completed, matrices associated with each domain of inquiry were grouped together and compared. We identified concepts within the domain that were limited to a single question as well as those that involved multiple questions. A similar comparison approach was used to examine concepts across broader interview guide domains. Context was taken into account to identify how and where conceptual explanations changed."… "Preliminary findings were used to develop the initial codebook for the in-depth analysis."… "The second step of the analysis process occurred after all data were collected and involved in-depth computer-assisted textual data analysis." (Kiawi et al., 2012)*

2. *"Interview transcripts were analyzed using a rapid assessment process, an intensive, iterative process that allows for rapid analysis of time-sensitive qualitative data. Transcripts were summarized by 4 study members using a data summary template in Microsoft Word, which was organized into themes. Themes were developed a priori based on the interview guide, with emergent themes identified throughout analysis. Templates were iteratively reviewed by analysts and qualitative leads (EJA, ECW) and updated throughout analysis to include emergent themes, based on consensus of the analytic team." (Corcorran et al., 2023)*

**Explanation:**

Research and evaluation teams should clearly describe the methods used for analysis and if different analytical approaches were carried out in parallel. For instance, some evaluation or research teams may rely on rapid approaches for analysis, such as relying on field notes to complete RREAL sheets (discussed in section 3.e), along with listening back to snippets of audio-recorded interviews, to support the completion of RREAL sheets. Using these notes, the analysis teams can then produce brief reports or presentations for the findings, but they may not be able to carry out in-depth analysis in real-time. These teams might then carry out a separate stage of more in-depth analysis with a completely transcribed dataset.

**Statement:**

**b) Provide information on any approaches, processes or practices used to ensure quality in data analysis.**

**Example:**

1. *"Significant field notes were kept during the process of analysis in order to provide an audit trail of each step of the process and to monitor the reflexivity of the researcher."* (Dainty & Kiran, 2020)
2. *"To ensure continued immersion and rigor in our qualitative data we analyzed the transcripts using hand-coding. First, each author read and reread the raw data line-by-line and then derived codes relevant to our research questions."* (Chilanga et al., 2022)

**Explanation:**

It is important to report any strategies used by the research team to maintain the quality of the analysis. For instance, some rapid research and evaluation teams have used pre-established templates to guide the synthesis and categorisation of data, the use of a codebook to ensure codes are applied consistently by all team members, the use of a team member acting as a cross-checker (looking across all coded content to ensure consistency) and the use of extensive notes to guide interpretation.

**Statement:**

**c) Provide information on any approaches, processes or practices used to ensure consistency in the methods of data analysis across team members.**

**Example:**

1. *"The coders also reviewed one another's subset of transcripts to establish consistency in coding. Once consistency was established, the remainder of the transcripts were allocated evenly between the two coders."* (Albert et al., 2021)
2. *"To assess consistency across the analysis team, each of the members performed rapid summary analysis of two common transcripts."* (Douglass et al., 2021)

**Explanation:**

Similarly to section 3.d steps should be taken to ensure consistency in the way team members analyse data, when relying on multiple team members to speed up the analysis of data. For instance, multiple team members can analyse the same subset of data independently and then cross-check their analysis.

**Statement:**

**d) If relevant, provide a clear description of the type of data triangulation that was used and how triangulation was implemented.**

**Example:**

1. *"Triangulating data from three sources: interviews with key informants, observations of clinical encounters and the local health and social care context, and routine data from local reports and statistics."* (Grant et al., 2011)
2. *"We conducted interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs) with Roma community members (CMs), healthcare professionals (HPs) serving the population and key informants (KIs). Observations of households and clinical consultations were additionally conducted for data triangulation"… "Data structuring and reduction was first performed per informant group, before combining the data of the different groups. Findings from observations, and field notes were then studied for presence of additional or contradicting themes to triangulate data before final themes were concluded."* (Anastasaki et al., 2022)

**Explanation:**

If data from different sources have been brought together during analysis, then this process of triangulation should be clearly described. The specific data sources should be mentioned as well as the processes used to synthesize and compare findings (Campbell et al., 2020).

**Statement:**

**e) Confirm if any findings were shared with stakeholders as the study was ongoing, report on what was shared, if feedback was received, and whether the feedback was used to make changes to the study design.**

**Example:**

1. *"Our approach utilised parallel data collection and analysis. Data triangulation was conducted iteratively at the end of each day, to provide 1-page summaries to the stakeholders."* (Gawaya et al., 2022)
2. *"The evaluation was successful in providing interim CFIR-informed feedback to implementation stakeholders rather than waiting for the end of implementation to assess its success"… "The results of our evaluation led to revisions in a detailed implementation manual that is provided to new expansion sites."* (Cohn et al., 2021)

**Explanation:**

The iterative nature of many rapid studies allows the sharing of preliminary findings as the study is ongoing. Stakeholders might provide feedback on the findings and prompt changes in the study design. It is important to report if findings were shared, if feedback was received and if the feedback was used to make changes in the rapid appraisal or rapid evaluation.

# RESULT INTERPRETATION

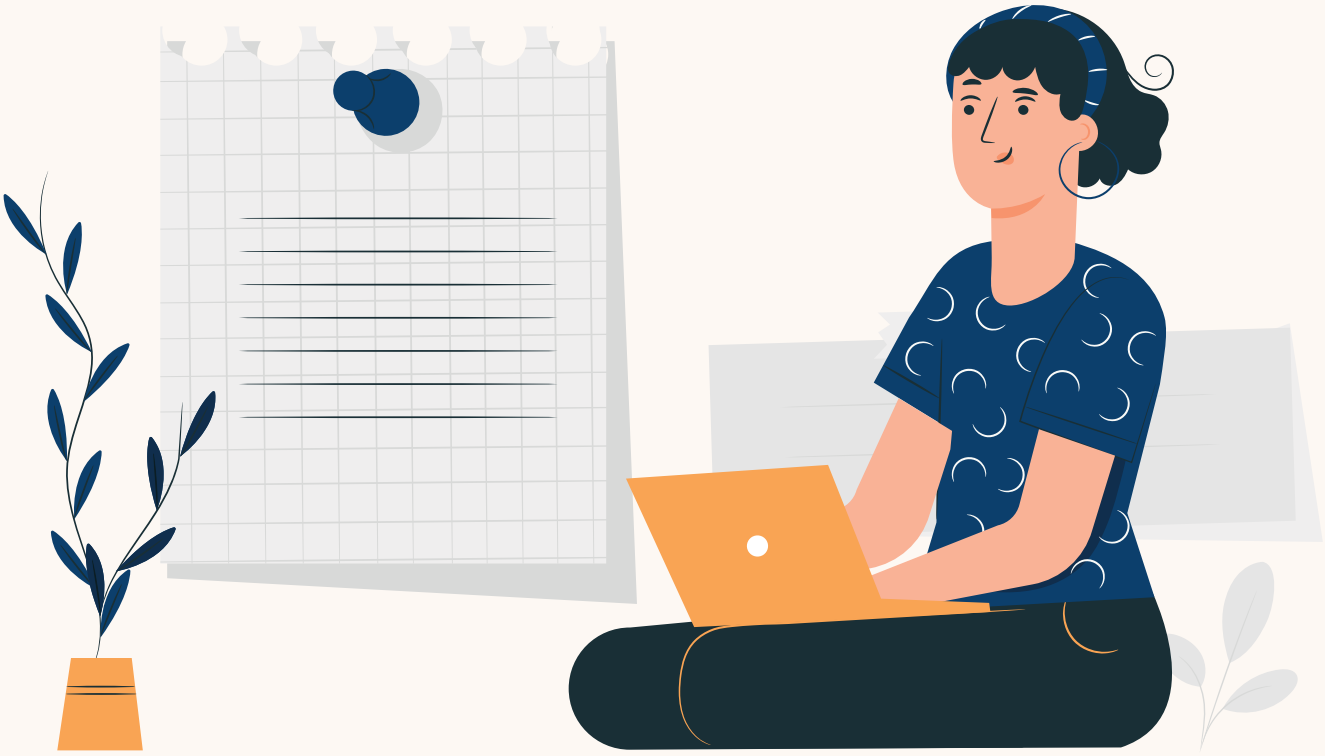
a. Report if member checking was used (checking findings with study participants). Describe the approach that was used, how participant feedback was integrated, and, if not, describe why.

b. Describe how the findings from the study relate to the existing published literature.

c. If relevant to the study aims, report if there were any issues with the study design that prevented transferability or comparison to existing evidence and populations.

d. Confirm if any implications or recommendations were made based on the findings from the study.

e. Clearly report the limitations or gaps of the study.



## 5. RESULT INTERPRETATION

**Statement:**

**a) Report if member checking was used (checking findings with study participants). Describe the approach that was used, how participant feedback was integrated, and, if not, describe why.**

**Example:**

1. *"Following the completion of data collection in each village, a feedback session was held with the research team, study participants, VHT members and community leaders, providing a final opportunity for review and validation of findings."* (Altaras et al., 2017)
2. *"We wrote a short report of the findings for each site we studied for two reasons: first, we thought the organizations would find them useful, and second, the report was a form of "member checking," a qualitative technique to further establish trustworthiness of results by asking insiders for feedback."* (Ash et al., 2016)

**Explanation:**

Member checking is an approach that has often been used in qualitative research to ensure quality in the interpretation of study findings. This is facilitated by researchers and evaluators sharing the study findings with the study participants to cross-check their interpretation of the findings (Sahakyan, 2023).

**Statement:**

**b) Describe how the findings from the study relate to the existing published literature.**

**Example:**

1. *"This study extends previous research conducted in Africa that has linked alcohol use and sexual risk behaviour (Mnyika et al., 1997; Trigg et al., 1997). This research complements qualitative studies conducted in Zimbabwe (Fritz et al., 2002; Mataure et al., 2002) and helps to further understanding of the relationships."* (Morojele et al., 2006)
2. *"This work complements early evidence from settings around the globe on how lockdowns and related home confinements have been associated with observed changes in dietary and physical activity patterns (22–24)."* (Lim et al., 2022)

**Explanation:**

When it comes to interpreting findings, it is important to discuss how the study findings might confirm, expand or contradict the evidence reported in the existing literature.

**Statement:**

**c) If relevant to the study aims, report if there were any issues with the study design that prevented transferability or comparison to existing evidence and populations.**

**Example:**

1. *"This study was conducted in only one boarding primary school due to limited time and funds available. Clearly the sample size is small and results of this study may not be generalisable to the rest of primary schools whether in rural or in urban settings."* (Akello et al., 2007)
2. *"Furthermore, a purposive sampling approach (the recruitment of participants with particular characteristics to obtain an in-depth understanding of certain phenomenon) was utilized. As such, these data are not necessarily generalizable to the perspectives of all USVI women and men of reproductive age, and the data may reflect perspectives of younger, more highly educated, and potentially higher-income men."* (Brittain et al., 2019)

**Explanation:**

It is often the case with rapid evaluations and appraisals that sample sizes are small and samples have limited representativeness due to limited time periods for recruitment. It is important for researchers and evaluators to flag this in their write up findings, and reflect on how this may affect generalisability and comparisons with other populations, which are likely to be larger and more diverse in characteristics (Utarini et al., 2001).

**Statement:**

**d) Confirm if any implications or recommendations were made based on the findings from the study.**

**Example:**

1. *"Lastly, delivering evaluations within an 8-week period requires continuous collaboration with policy or program content experts to acquire meaningful stakeholder input throughout the rapid evaluation cycle. Stakeholder engagement in the first weeks of project delivery is critical to REM success."* (Gawaya et al., 2022)
2. *"Finally, it became clear that we had under-estimated the resources required (with one field worker over 4 weeks) and, while we believe that this approach can achieve valuable insights with minimal resources, in future studies we would recommend a team of perhaps four or five people, to provide wider geographic coverage and more specialised analysis of certain elements of care, such as systems of pharmaceutical distribution, analysis of routine statistics and assessment of quality of care."* (Hopkinson et al., 2004)

**Explanation:**

The research or evaluation team should report if any recommendations were developed using the findings of the study and who received the recommendations.

**Statement:**

e) Clearly report the limitations or gaps of the study.

**Example:**

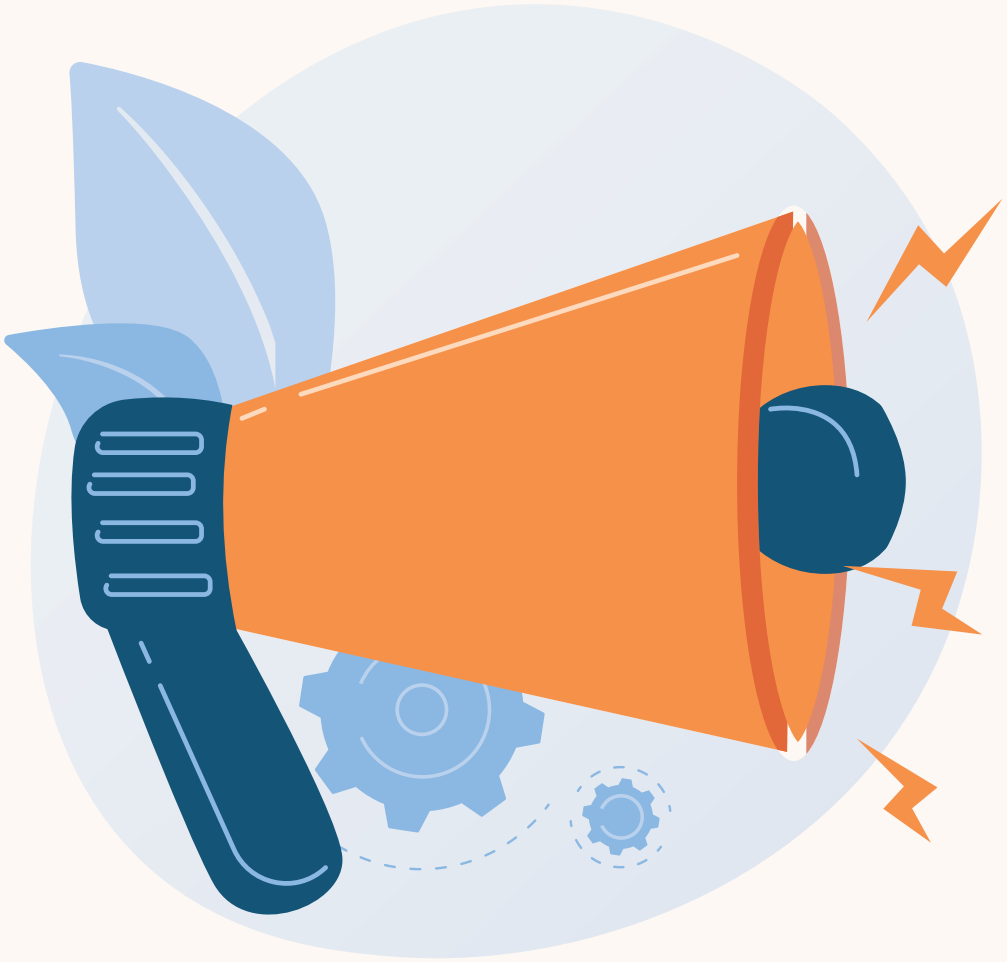
1. *"Although RAP techniques are efficient and effective, they take their toll on the researchers during fieldwork. Periods of observation were particularly stressful because researchers were under great pressure to be in the right place at the right time to see activities relevant to CDS."* (Ash et al., 2008)
2. *"There may have been a lack of consistency on data collection between interviewing teams. Not all teams were available for ongoing education regarding survey methodology during the interview periods. Feedback was provided to some of the teams throughout the survey period, but not all teams were available to receive this information. This lack of consistency on data collection may affect our findings and limit the ability to do further detail analysis on some variables, such as injury."* (Bayleyegn et al., 2006)

**Explanation:**

It is important to note the limitations of a study so that readers can understand the findings of the study in this context. It is also important to note the limitations so readers can understand the challenges that may have been encountered and how to plan their studies to avoid these (Ioannidis, 2007).

# DISSEMINATION

- **a** Provide a clear description of the purpose and plan of dissemination and confirm if any changes occurred to the planned dissemination.
- **b** Describe whether dissemination was carried out as the study was ongoing and/or after the study ended.
- **c** Confirm if it is possible to access the raw data from the study on request.



## 6. DISSEMINATION

**Statement:**

**a) Provide a clear description of the purpose and plan of dissemination and confirm if any changes occurred to the planned dissemination.**

**Example:**

1. *"In Table 4 overleaf, we present an outline dissemination strategy used for a BRACE Centre rapid evaluation of the early implementation of primary care networks in the NHS in England" (Smith et al., 2023) "dissemination to policy-makers, practitioners and representatives of patients, carers and the public"… "Develop recommendations for commissioners, providers and policy-makers through academic outputs, virtual meetings with policy-makers, blogs, podcasts and online media"…"The study team kept BRACE Health and Care Panel members updated about project progress through quarterly e-bulletins, and we presented a full update of the study and its emerging themes at a Health and Care Panel workshop in Birmingham in September 2019, seeking advice and challenges about the focus of the project, and its likely dissemination."* (Smith et al., 2022)

**Explanation:**

A dissemination plan developed early in the rapid appraisal or rapid evaluation can influence when data collection and analysis take place, when findings are shared and how, and who is the audience.

**Statement:**

**b) Describe whether dissemination was carried out as the study was ongoing and/or after the study ended.**

**Example:**

1. *"Draft findings were presented to the technical advisory group, then to SESPAS leadership, and next presented at a dissemination stakeholder's meeting. Recommendations and action plans developed at the meeting were incorporated into a final report."* (Miller et al., 2003)
2. *"The findings were not shared in an extensive report, but in the form of a one-page table (see Figure 1 for a description of this process). We also developed an infographic to disseminate the study design and will be using it to share emerging findings."* (Vindrola-Padros et al., 2020)

**Explanation:**

It is important to report when findings were shared, if this was done as the study was ongoing in the form of regular feedback loops or cycles or only after the study ended. If findings were shared as the study was ongoing, researchers should report if feedback on the findings was obtained and if any changes were made in the study as a result of the feedback (Metz & Batley, 2012).

**Statement:**

**c) Confirm if it is possible to access the raw data from the study on request.**

**Example:**

1. *"The data that support the findings of this study are available on request from the corresponding author. The data are not publicly available due to privacy or ethical considerations."* (Walton et al., 2022)
2. *"Author elects to not share data."* (Tort-Nasarre et al., 2021)

**Explanation:**

It can be important to make unidentifiable study data available to those that request it, as it allows other researchers and evaluators to understand the dataset and the data analysis approach in greater depth.

# IMPACT

**a** If possible, report on how findings were used by the commissioners of the study and/or other stakeholders, and if they were not used as planned, share the reasons for this.

## 7. IMPACT

**Statement:**

**a) If possible, report on how findings were used by the commissioners of the study and/or other stakeholders, and if they were not used as planned, share the reasons for this.**

**Example:**

1. *"meetings of the 'Working Group' provided important and constructive guidance on the initial direction for the work (and in the meeting at the conclusion of the project this group also provided a link to implementation). When we entered the field, however, we found that fixing dates for bringing together the 'Working Group' proved impossible. Whilst disappointing and accepting that the absence of such personal contact may have had some impact on the perceived worth of the data and the longer-term utility or implementation"* (Balogh et al., 2008)

2. *"The rapid evaluation insights were valuable to inform health services, workforce and families about the relevant benefits and challenges of using telehealth. Findings facilitated triple-loop learning to inform areas for further investigation."… "A positive outcome of the department completing a considerable number of rapid evaluations during COVID-19, were cross project findings to inform decision-making."… "The REM approach was effective in delivering fit-for-purpose findings to support decision-making within the dynamic COVID-19 context. The rapid evaluation approach produced findings about the service delivery changes due to COVID-19 response, the outcomes and potential for sustenance of the practice changes that were valued by end users. During field work, the rapid evaluations provided immediate feedback for the strategic planning team for the HRAR response which enabled them to make improvements based on the evidence instead of later on in the pandemic. The approach delivered early implementation insights within a much shorter period than traditional evaluation which can take much longer periods (12 months to 5 years) depending on the design. CERE observed that timely delivery of evaluation outputs supported a high level of utilisation for decision-making and influenced program adaptation and improvements. Learnings from the evaluation have been incorporated into commissioning the next phase of HRAR delivery, including a strengthened data reporting and evaluation framework."* (Gawaya et al., 2022)

**Explanation:**

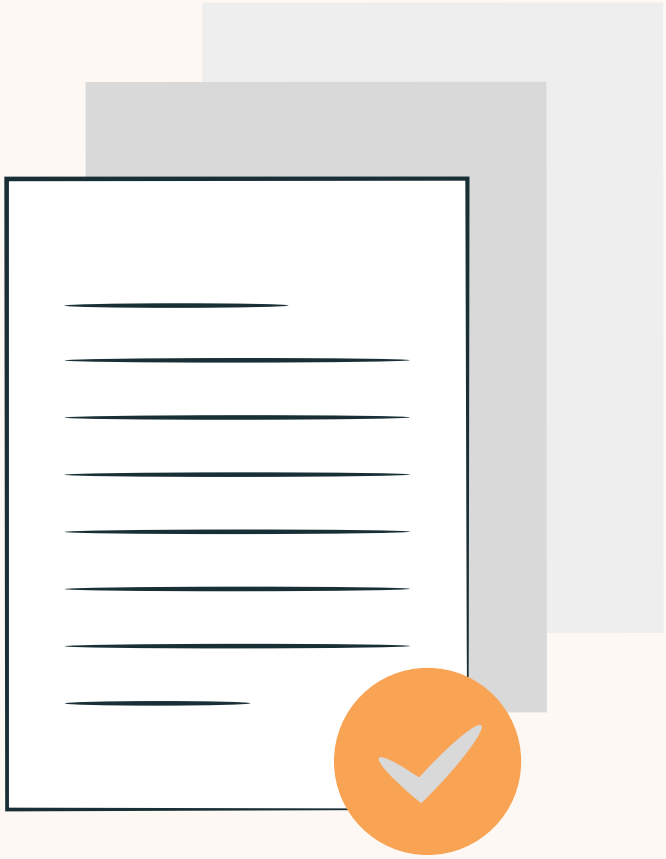
There is often limited information on how findings are used by commissioners or other stakeholders, and the impact of the use of these findings on changes in practice and/or policy. It is important to plan with commissioners for this information to be shared so that researchers and evaluators can understand how their study may have benefited society or future research. If findings are not used, this information might also be useful for researchers and evaluators.

# GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

a Include a statement on the regulatory and/or ethical approvals that were agreed, include any cases when these may not have been required and justify why.

b Include a statement on the funding source.

c Include a statement on any conflicts of interest.



## 8. GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

**Statement:**

**a) Include a statement on the regulatory and/or ethical approvals that were agreed, include any cases when these may not have been required and justify why.**

**Example:**

1. *"Ethical approval of the analysis and fieldwork was provided by the Ministry of Health counterparts in each country."* (Hipgrave et al., 2019)
2. *"This project was a "service evaluation" rather than experimental research and as such did not require formal ethical approval"... "Permission was granted to carry out these detailed evaluations from the relevant hospital board, and the Senior Management of the Charities responsible for delivering the palliative care programmes."* (Grant et al., 2011)

**Explanation:**

All research/evaluation teams should report how they obtained the required regulatory or ethical approvals.

**Statement:**

**b) Include a statement on the funding source.**

**Example:**

1. *"This research was funded by the Division of HIV Epidemiology & Surveillance, Bureau of HIV/AIDS, STD & TB, Centre for Infectious Disease Prevention and Control, Health Canada, the British Columbia Centre for Disease Control (STD/AIDS Control), and the Vancouver Island Health Authority, Victoria, Canada."* (Stajduhar et al., 2004)
2. *"This work was supported and funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Prevention Research Centers Program (Cooperative agreements to the University of Rochester: 1U48DP005026-01S1, 1U48DP005010-01S1, and 1U48DP005023s-01S1) and the CDC Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health (REACH) (Cooperative Agreements to the University of Hawai'i: U58DP005810-01 and U58DP005810-02)."* (Sy et al., 2020)

**Explanation:**

Reporting the funding source of studies can allow readers to understand if any unreported bias may have occurred in the study.

**Statement:**

**c) Include a statement on any conflicts of interest.**

**Example:**

1. *"Conflict of Interest Statement: The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest."* (Weiss et al., 2016)
2. *"Conflict of interest. None to disclose."* (Livorsi et al., 2016)

**Explanation:**

Reporting any conflicts of interest can allow readers to understand if any bias might be present in the study, or it can allow readers to understand how any potential conflicts of interest were overcome.

# SUMMARY

This explanation and elaboration document has elaborated on STREAM to guide the design and implementation; the reporting of; and the critical appraisal of rapid evaluation and rapid appraisal studies in a wide range of contexts. However, it may become apparent with further real-life use of these standards, that some items may be more relevant or useful for researchers or evaluators than others. The team responsible for developing STREAM, therefore, plan to review how STREAM is used in different contexts by other evaluators and researchers, to make further updates to the standards in the future. We therefore ask any evaluators or researchers that have used STREAM in practice to share their experiences with the research team at: https://www.rapidresearchandevaluation.com/

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