

# ***The AACPDM Methodology to Develop Systematic Reviews of Treatment Interventions***

## **Policy and Procedures for Use and Publication of SRs**

**(June 2014)**

### **Introduction**

In the mid-1990's, the AACPDM formed a Treatment Outcomes Committee to develop, pilot, and refine a systematic review methodology suitable for understanding the research in developmental medicine, which is complicated by several circumstances. What the AACPDM Methodology for Systematic Reviews offers beyond other systematic review (SR) protocols is a strategy for examining interventions for the diverse group of children with abilities and challenges in whole person activities. Specifically, it has operationalized the steps to apply the International Classification of Functioning, Health and Disability (ICF) framework to systematic reviews. It has made it possible to evaluate the level of evidence from single subject research studies as well from group studies. It has made it possible to assess the confidence one can have in research outcomes when the body of evidence available includes mostly, or only, lesser levels of research evidence.

*The AACPDM Methodology to Develop Systematic Review of Treatment Interventions* employs a unique structured format to construct an evidence table based on the combined use of the ICF and levels of evidence for the synthesis, analysis and summarization of the evidence. The evidence table generated from this synthesis is examined to analyze and describe the evidence. Six questions structure the discussion to show what kinds of outcomes have been studied as they relate to 1) impairment of body structure(s) and function, 2) activities 3) participation, and 3) contextual factors that create disablement, as well as the strength of those research findings. The questions also reveal whether linkages have been observed between these ICF components, whether adverse effects have been documented, and what gaps there in the evidence.

### **Policy: Then and Now**

During the period of development and refinement of the AACPDM methodology, its use was restricted to systematic reviews done under the specific direction and involvement of the Treatment Outcomes Committee (TOC). Upon final approval, the review was submitted by the Treatment

Outcomes Committee to the Academy's journal, *Developmental Medicine and Child Neurology*, for publication as an Academy-sanctioned review.

The mission of the TOC to develop, pilot and refine this methodology is now complete, and the committee disbanded. The AACPDM Methodology is available for use by any interested authors, with no oversight by, or publication through, the AACPDM.

### **Recommended Procedures for Using the AACPDM Methodology.**

The following documents will be used to conduct an AACPDM systematic review. All documents are available on this website.

1. Authors will use the final version of the methodology.

*The AACPDM Methodology to Develop Systematic Reviews of Treatment Interventions, Revision 1.2, 2008.*

2. Authors will reference this study that documents the reliability and validity of the AACPDM methodology for systematic reviews of group design studies in the Methods section of their review.

*Wiert, et. al. Interrater reliability and convergent validity of the American Academy for Cerebral Palsy and Developmental Medicine methodology for conducting systematic reviews. DMCN, 2012; 54: 606-611.*

3. Authors will use accepted tools to assure high quality of their reporting of their systematic review.

- 1) The Wiert study produced a dictionary and specific guideline for how to evaluate the conduct of a group study for the AACPDM SRs.

#### *Conduct of Study Guideline*

- 2) The following two checklists have been combined into a single working checklist with the DMCN elements shown in red font.

#### *AACPDM/PRISMA Checklist.*

a) Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) is a 27- item checklist, widely accepted as containing the standard necessary elements to be reported in a systematic review. Many journals require authors to use the PRISMA checklist.

b) The AACPDM Checklist aims to help authors evaluate the thoroughness of their development and discussion of the evidence according to the

designated format used for analysis, synthesis and summary of the evidence.

### **Recommended Procedures for Publication**

1. Authors can submit their systematic reviews to any journal of their choosing. Most journals have specific instructions for both authors and reviewers of systematic reviews. DMCN requires their authors and reviewers to use the PRISMA Checklist plus the AACPDM Checklist.

2. The title, abstract and/or key words should include "AACPDM methodology" or "AACPDM systematic review"

### **Recommended Procedure for Additional Dissemination**

Upon publication, authors are urged to submit the citation of their review to the Center on Knowledge Translation for Disability and Rehabilitation Research, which maintains a Registry of Systematic Reviews. KTDDR welcomes and accept contributions from authors.

<http://www.ktdrr.org/systematicregistry/about.html>

Authors seeking assistance can contact Charlene Butler at

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