

# STANDARDS OF EVIDENCE FOR INFORMING DECISIONS ON CHOOSING AMONG ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES TO PROVIDING RH/FP SERVICES

Ian Askew, Population Council  
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# Three Issues

1

Research designs and types of evidence

2

Summarizing bodies of evidence from multiple research studies

3

Using bodies of evidence for decisions



# Why are RCTs Considered the ‘Gold Standard’ for Generating Evidence of Impact?

- **Theoretical control for internal validity; rigorous design; quantifiable evidence**
- **Understandability** by decision-makers with medical training
- **Publishability** of findings for academic researchers
- **Usability** as evidence base for systematic reviews

# Evidence from Non-Randomized “Quasi-Experimental” Designs is Frequently Used to Answer Questions of Impact and Alternatives

## CONTROLLED BEFORE-AFTER

- Controlled through matching rather than randomization

## INTERRUPTED TIME SERIES

- An extended Before-After, with or without a control

## PROSPECTIVE COHORT, WITH OR WITHOUT CONTROL

- Equivalent rigor for comparisons
  - Matching
  - Multi-stage sampling
  - Quantifiable evidence
- Allows program managers some influence
- Learn about implementation in “real-life” setting



**A global health evidence framework [is] one which uses multiple domains to arrive at a summary judgment of the evidence for community or population health interventions or programs.**



*Source: Luoto et al, 2013*

# Making Evidence-Based Decisions: Summarizing a **Body of Evidence** through Rigorous Reviews Using an **Evidence Framework**

- Guided by theory of change
- Methodical and transparent procedures for inclusion / exclusion of evidence
- Rate evidence across multiple domains
  - Design; quantity; relevance; consistency; context....
- Summary judgment of evidence informs recommendations

**“Systematic Reviews” have  
traditionally focused on  
evidence of effectiveness,  
rather than implementation**

# Which Review Process and Evidence Framework is Appropriate for which Type of Recommendation?

**EFFICACY** of a service intervention in meeting health needs of the individual/couple

- e.g. service delivery guidelines

**EFFECTIVENESS** of delivering interventions through programmatic approaches

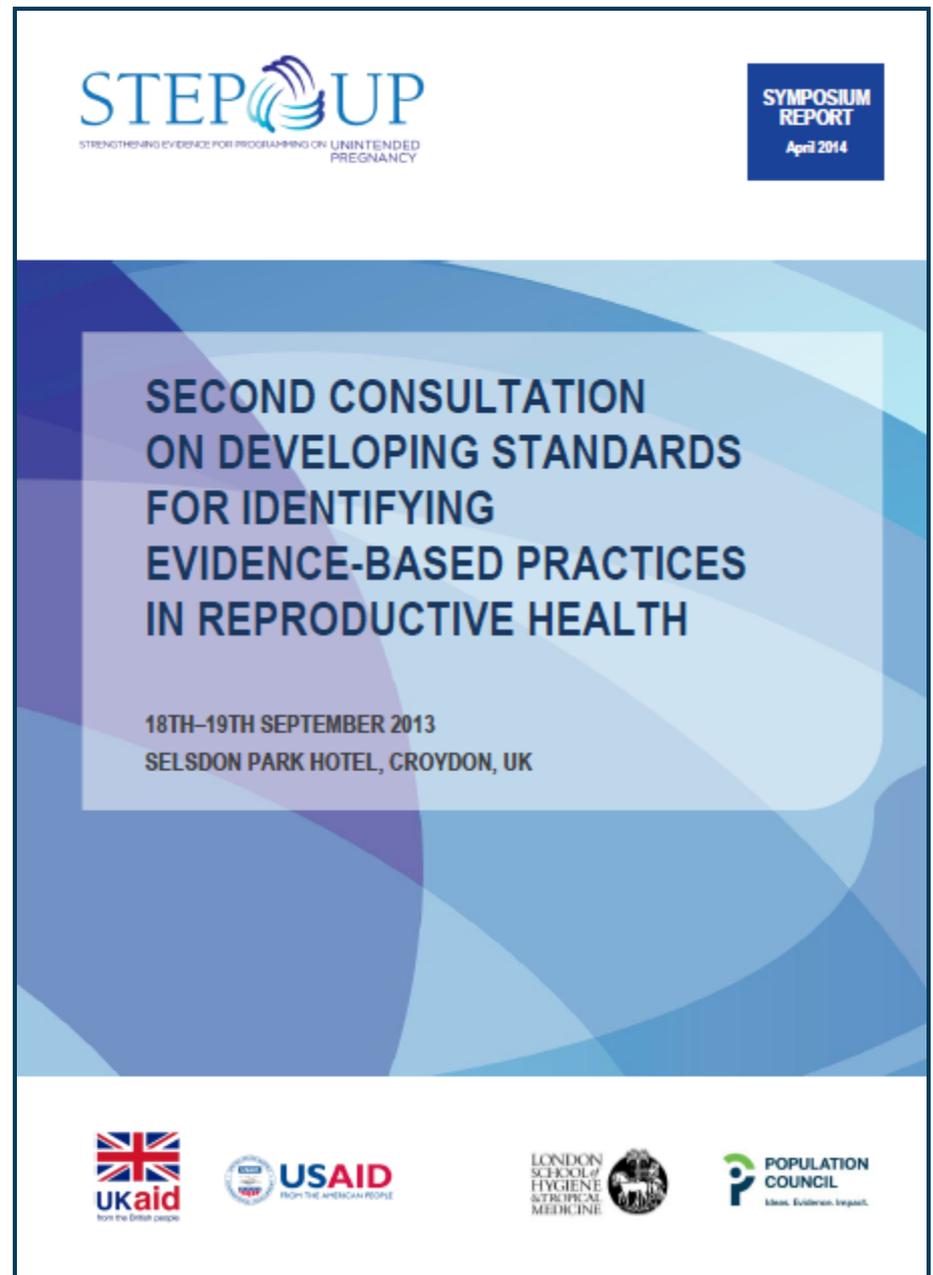
- e.g. sustainability programming guidance

**SUSTAINABILITY** at system/national level

- e.g. systems strengthening and scale-up/mainstreaming interventions



Fuller discussion  
of issues  
available in  
meeting report





# **Three Suggestions for Improving Use of Research-Based Evidence for Decision-Making**

1

# Accept and support generation of 'plausible' evidence from non-randomized yet rigorous research

- RFPs require and fund matched designs, multivariate analyses, rigorous documentation of implementation processes, clearer descriptions of intervention and study design (PICOT, TREND)

## 2

# Decide on a uniform standard of evidence

- Agreed evidence framework and rating system
- Agreed process for determining strength of recommendation
- Standards appropriate for type of decision

# 3

## Communicate findings from evidence reviews effectively and clearly

- Evidence-informed choice from options
- Describe standard of evidence used

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