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

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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

- 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
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
Communicate findings from evidence reviews effectively and clearly

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

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