Where should our research priorities lie? Using stakeholder engagement to inform the future of tobacco control

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The Cochrane Tobacco Addiction Group (CTAG) celebrated its 20th anniversary in 2016. To mark the event we completed a project funded by the UK National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) School for Primary Care Research. The goals of the project were to:

1. Identify and prioritise areas where further research is needed in the areas of tobacco control and smoking cessation from a wider stakeholder perspective. Our stakeholders include: members of the public who smoke or have smoked, researchers, health professionals, policy makers, funders, care commissioners, health campaigners.

2. To identify CTAG specific research goals within the outcomes of our first goal.

Methods

We asked our stakeholders incl. SRNT 2016 delegates to tell us which questions they would still like to see answered by tobacco control research. This identified 183 unanswered questions, within 15 research categories.

43 of our stakeholders attended a 1-day workshop where they discussed their priorities for tobacco research and suggestions for research dissemination.

Survey 1 (N=304)
The findings of survey 1 were fed back to respondents who were asked to prioritise the research categories & the questions within them.

Survey 2 (N=175)
The findings of survey 1 were fed back to respondents who were asked to prioritise the research categories & the questions within them.

Workshop

Top 8 tobacco related research categories

1. Electronic cigarettes
   - Survey ranking: 1 of 15
   - Workshop ranking: 3 (tie) of 15

2. Addressing inequalities
   - Survey ranking: 2 of 15
   - Workshop ranking: 1 of 15

3. Mental health and substance abuse
   - Survey ranking: 3 of 15
   - Workshop ranking: 5 (tie) of 15

4. Initiating quit attempts
   - Survey ranking: 4 of 15
   - Workshop ranking: 3 (tie) of 15

5. Population-level interventions
   - Survey ranking: 5 of 15
   - Workshop ranking: 7 (tie) of 15

6. Pregnancy
   - Survey ranking: 6 of 15
   - Workshop ranking: 7 (tie) of 15

7. Young people
   - Survey ranking: 7 of 15
   - Workshop ranking: 5 (tie) of 15

8. Treatment delivery
   - Survey ranking: 12 of 15
   - Workshop ranking: 2 of 15

Overarching priorities identified in workshop

1. Efficacy
2. Cost effectiveness
3. Addressing inequalities
4. Comparing active interventions

What’s next

Our action plan following the CTAG TAPS project:

1. Report CTAG TAPS findings. We are currently writing a full report of our findings which we will post on our website: https://tobacco.cochrane.org/ctag-taps-project. The findings will also be published in the journal Addiction

2. Set CTAG priorities. The unanswered questions and overarching priorities identified will be used to commission new Cochrane systematic reviews and plan updates of existing reviews.