



COMET Newsletter



COMET Network Methodological Meeting, Bristol June 2014

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A methodological meeting held in Bristol in June this year was attended by 33 individuals representing 14 universities, hospitals and institutes from around the UK. The aim of the meeting was to bring Core Outcome Set (COS) developers together to share experiences and inform those planning, or at the beginning, of COS development. The day considered all stages of the process but with some focus on Delphi methodology.

Presentations in the morning focussed on specific methodological issues: how to get from the long list of potential outcomes to a shorter list of 'domains' to be included in the Delphi questionnaire; the impact on the final COS of different stakeholders' opinions; and the variability in methods currently used. The afternoon focussed on patient and participant involvement, issues with recruitment and participation and the need for further work to better engage the public. Small group discussions enabled participants to describe the methods they had implemented or were planning to implement within their COS development and to further discuss the methodological issues highlighted in the presentations. Participants reported that they found the meeting very useful and that there was a definite need for guidance from COMET and other COS researchers.

The meeting was organised and run by Paula Williamson and Liz Gargon (University of Liverpool), Jane Blazeby and Sara Brookes (University of Bristol)

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Methods to include patient reported outcome measures into COS

Macefield *et al.* *Trials* 2014 Feb 5;15:49. doi: [10.1186/1745-6215-15-49](https://doi.org/10.1186/1745-6215-15-49)

It is challenging to incorporate patient-reported outcomes (PROs) into Core Outcome Sets (COSs) because of the multiplicity of PRO measures (PROMs) available. Patient reported outcome measures have numerous scales and single items often with different, overlapping and sometimes opaque terminology. This paper unravelled some of these issues with an in-depth analysis of existing PROMs in the field of oesophageal cancer surgery to inform COS development. Literature reviews identified 21 generic and disease-specific PROMs containing 116 scales and 32 single items including 94 different verbatim names. Methods were developed to map the 94 items onto core domains to enable the PROMs content to inform the development of a core set. Expert clinicians, methodologists and patients categorised each item within PROMs and compared and contrasted views with PROM developer's scoring systems and item meaning. This reduced the PRO items to 32 health domains.

The final domains were incorporated into a Delphi study with the clinical outcomes for oesophageal cancer surgery from an earlier surgical literature review (Blencowe *et al* *Annals of Surgery* 2012). This survey has been distributed to key stakeholders' and the core outcome set should be ready for use in 2015.

Jane M Blazeby and Rhiannon Macefield (Photo Rhiannon – currently on maternity leave)



COMET in the news

1. Keener, A. B. (2014). "Group seeks standardization for what clinical trials must measure." *Nature Medicine* **20**(8): 798-799. doi:[10.1038/nm0814-798](https://doi.org/10.1038/nm0814-798)
2. Dale M. Needham. (2014). "Understanding and Improving Clinical Trial Outcome Measures in Acute Respiratory Failure", *American Journal of Respiratory and Critical Care Medicine*, Vol. 189, No. 8 pp. 875-877. doi: [10.1164/rccm.201402-0362ED](https://doi.org/10.1164/rccm.201402-0362ED)
3. Dwyer, P. L., P. Riss, et al. (2014). "Does it matter what we measure? Core outcomes, the IUJ and the CROWN and COMET initiatives." *International Urogynecology Journal* **25**(10): 1301-1302. doi: [10.1007/s00192-014-2448-0](https://doi.org/10.1007/s00192-014-2448-0)
4. Evans JR & Lawrenson JG. A review of the evidence for dietary interventions in preventing or slowing the progression of age-related macular degeneration. *Ophthalmic Physiol Opt* 2014; 34: 390–396. doi: [10.1111/opo.12142](https://doi.org/10.1111/opo.12142)
5. Khan, K. (2014), The CROWN Initiative: journal editors invite researchers to develop core outcomes in women's health. *BJOG: An International Journal of Obstetrics & Gynaecology*, 121: 1181–1182. doi: [10.1111/1471-0528.12929](https://doi.org/10.1111/1471-0528.12929)
6. Budhdeo, S., A. Chari, et al. (2014). "Patient-centred healthcare outcome measures: towards a unified architecture." *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine* **107**(8): 300-302. doi: [10.1177/0141076814545701](https://doi.org/10.1177/0141076814545701)



COMET PhD studentships

MRC Hubs for Trials Methodology Research

Up to 20 MRC funded PhD projects available in trials methodology research at locations across the UK

The MRC Network of Hubs for Trials Methodology Research (HTMR) aims to improve health by improving trials. Their PhD programme presents a unique opportunity to undertake training in the UK in trials methodology research. Over 40 projects have been shortlisted for application, and opportunities for funding are available for both clinical research training fellows, and PhD students across the UK. Four of these may be of interest:

[Understanding consensus within the Delphi process in core outcome sets](#) (University of Bristol)

[Determining outcome measures for a surgical core outcome set](#) (University of Bristol)

[Methods to assess and improve the uptake of core outcome sets](#) (University of Liverpool)

[Methods for involving patients in core outcome set development](#) (University of Liverpool)

Information about each of these projects can be found by clicking the above links, or alternatively you can visit http://www.methodologyhubs.mrc.ac.uk/about_us/phd2015/phd2015-projects.aspx

How to apply

Please visit the website for details on projects, eligibility and how to apply. Applicants must discuss their application with the project supervisor of their first-choice project before 17 November 2014. Completed application forms must be returned to: enquiries@methodologyhubs.mrc.ac.uk by 4pm (GMT) 24th November 2014.

Improving Health by Improving Trials

www.methodologyhubs.mrc.ac.uk/



Core Outcome Measures in Effectiveness Trials

Save the date

**Wednesday 20th and Thursday 21st
May 2015**

We are pleased to announce the 5th Meeting of the COMET Initiative

**University of Calgary,
Alberta, Canada**

More details and registration to follow



COMET Management Group: Professor Doug Altman, Professor Jane Blazeby, Professor Mike Clarke, Miss Elizabeth Gargon, Professor Paula Williamson

