

## ABSTRACT SUBMISSION AIC 2016: #116

**1. Title:**

What do we know about how rapid reviews are implemented in policy agencies?

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**3. Key words:**

Rapid reviews, research utilization

**4. Abstract text:**

**a. Background and aims**

Rapid reviews are a relatively new approach to addressing policymakers' need to access timely and reliable research evidence. To date, little is known about whether and how policymakers use rapid reviews. This study examined their use in policy development, agenda setting, evaluation and research.

**b. Methods**

Using structured questionnaires we interviewed policy makers who had commissioned rapid reviews using the Sax Institute's Evidence Check program over the past 7 years. We asked whether and how they had used the reviews, and what verification they could provide. Where reviews had not been used, we asked what obstacles were encountered. We developed a coding schedule to enable descriptive analyses and to categorise types of utilisation, verification and non-utilisation.

**c. Results**

Of 200 completed rapid reviews, 139 (70%) were included in this study. Ninety-six percent of rapid reviews were used. Policy makers reported that reviews were used most frequently in policy and program development; in setting priorities for future action or investment; to negotiate a decision across agencies or jurisdictions; to evaluate alternative actions; or to communicate information to stakeholders. Some reviews were used to develop research programs or clinical guidelines; or to confirm thinking and verify ideas. Reviews were used infrequently to justify or strengthen an existing policy position, develop evaluation programs or frameworks, or in data collection, linkage or analysis.

**d. Conclusion**

Findings suggest that commissioned rapid reviews are effective for accessing timely relevant research and that review findings are used in diverse ways.