Guideline for the management of a child aged 0-18 years with a decreased conscious level

Appendix G

Contains;

- Delphi Plan
Delphi Plan

1. Aim

The Delphi process is a consensus method that can be used where the research evidence is lacking or inconclusive. It is an anonymous method which seeks to gain a consensus of opinion between experts and stakeholders on a predetermined topic.

2. The rules

The rules to be followed for a Delphi are:

- Anonymity of participants
- Structured information flow and feedback to participants
- Statistical analysis of responses
- Iteration (allowing participants to change views in subsequent rounds)

The Delphi process will be co-ordinated by the systematic reviewer.

3. Select the panel

Organisations will be contacted and asked to nominate 20 panel members, with an aim of including 5 panel representatives from each speciality, allowing for drop-out. The panel will comprise 70 people from 7 specialities.

These specialities will include:

- General paediatricians
- Paediatric neurologists
- Emergency medicine physicians
- Dieticians
- Nursing
- Paediatric intensive care
- Metabolic

Nominated panel members will be approached and invite letters drafted and sent. The letter will outline the purpose, what will be involved and timeline. All responses will be compiled and additional panel members sought in specialties where there are less than 5 representatives. A confirmation letter will be circulated to all panel members via email. All letters will be sent with a 2 week deadline for responses.
4. Design the questionnaire

A Delphi working group was set up to oversee the development of the Delphi process and design the Delphi questionnaire. The questions used will be developed from the recommendations used in the original guideline.

The questionnaire will include:

- Evidences statement based on original recommendations
- Likert scale for participants to rate agreement
- Space for participants to comment

The questionnaire will be drawn up in a MS word document and sent to the GDG for comment and revisions. This will give the GDG the opportunity to comment on the questionnaire, particularly those areas which fall within their area of expertise and feedback to the project manager. Any comments or additional statements to be included in the questionnaire will be included on approval of the GDG. The project manager will collate and make amendments to the questionnaire and send to the GDG for final comments and sign off.

Participants will be required to rank recommendation on a scale of 1–9 and space will be provided for comments or alternative wording. An example question to help participants complete the questionnaire will be included. A consensus statement will be compiled when 75% participants agree or disagree with a statement.

Participant’s instructions will be drawn up to detail how to complete the questionnaire as well as the following:

- Participants will be asked not to consult with colleagues about their answers
- If a question is outside the participant’s expertise then participants can answer “No opinion”.
- Participants can give their reason for response, details of any different criteria they would use and reference papers if their answer is based on literature.

For non-clinical recommendations a separate Delphi questionnaire will be produced to be completed by the RCPCH children and young people advisory group.

5. Upload to survey monkey

The Delphi questionnaire will be completed in a word document and once approved the questions will be designed in survey monkey. The online version of the questionnaire will then be circulated to the GDG for their feedback and sign off.

6. Pilot

A pilot will be carried out to ensure the Delphi statements are easy to understand and the survey monkey questionnaire is user friendly. The online questionnaire will
be piloted with panellists nominated by the GDG. Any amendments following the pilot should be made before the questionnaire is finalised by the group. An email will be sent to Delphi participants describing the Delphi process and expectations regarding their participation. Participants will be blind to the responses of fellow participants.

Following the pilot any recommendations that the Delphi working group felt were unlikely to change following a Delphi process were removed from the questionnaire. This was to ensure the questionnaire was as concise and user friendly as possible, to gain maximum participation from Delphi panellists.

7. Round 1

Round 1 questionnaire will be sent to Delphi participants for completion. This will be sent via email; thanking them for agreeing to take part, explaining what they need to do and the closing date for the round. Participants will be able to access the questions by clicking on a link, which will take them to the web-site where the process of completing the round will be explained.

Participants will be given a 2 week deadline to return the questionnaire. A reminder will be sent to panel members after 1 week if they haven’t responded.

The systematic reviewer will collate and review comments from the pilot questionnaire, make necessary amendments and feedback to the GDG.

It will be emphasised to participants that they need to commit to two rounds. If participants drop out during round 1 they will not be included in round 2 and additional efforts will be made to target specialities which have low responses.

8. Summarise and analyse results

The systematic reviewer will compile responses to Delphi questionnaires present to the GDG. The following steps will be completed:

- Mean and percentage rating for each recommendation
- Each rating will be categorized by level of agreement as disagree strongly, neither agree nor disagree, or strongly agree:
  - All ratings in the range 1-3 = disagree strongly.
  - All ratings in the range 4-6 = neither agree nor disagree.
  - All ratings in the range 7-9 = agree strongly.
- The number of ratings in each of the 3 categories above will be counted and the proportion of each calculated for all items.
- If any group had less than 25 fully useable replies further efforts to get more would be undertaken.
9. Prepare questions for round 2

Statements that have already reached agree consensus will not be included in round 2. The responses to all questions will be reviewed and the questionnaire for round 2 revised.

- Comments written in the questionnaire will be recorded. This feedback will be considered in the development of the Round 2 questionnaire.
- Findings from the questionnaire will be discussed with the group and an agreement reached regarding a final list of questions to be included in Round 2:
  - Those recommendations reaching an “agree strongly” consensus will be included in the guideline and will not be included in the Round 2 questionnaire.
  - Those items reaching a “disagree strongly” consensus will be included in the guideline and will not be included in the Round 2 questionnaire.
  - Those items failing to reach consensus after Round 1 will be modified on the basis of ratings and written feedback. These items will be included in the Round 2 questionnaire.
- Develop and finalise Round 2 questionnaire:
  - Anonymous written feedback will be given to inform participants of results, including; percentages and individual round scores for each item
  - A new survey monkey questionnaire will need to be created.

10. Round 2

- Circulate Round 2 Delphi questionnaires to those panel members who completed the Round 1 questionnaire.
- Panel members will be asked to re-rank their opinions using the likert scale in light of the group feedback.
- Panel members will be instructed to complete questionnaires within 2 weeks. Non-responders will receive a 1-week reminder.
- The responses from the group will be entered and analysed following the same steps described above.
- The same procedure outlined above will be used to determine the inclusion of “agree strongly” and “disagree strongly” consensus items and items failing to reach a consensus a GDG consensus will be reached.

11. Reaching a consensus

- If 75% of the ratings fall within a set of 3 numbers, a consensus has been reached.
- The consensus can be strongly disagree, equivocal or strongly agree.
- If 75% of the comments fall within the agree section the recommendation will be included.
- A minimum number of 25 responses is needed for a consensus to be reached.
12. **Round 3**

A third round will be carried out in the event that consensus is not reached for all statements in round 2. The questions will be prepared as detailed in section 9.

If after round 3 a consensus is still not reached the Delphi working group will review the statistics and comments to formulate statements which will be agreed with the guideline development group.

13. **Parents, carers and young people Delphi process**

13.1. **Select the panel**

The RCPCH parent and carer and young person group will be approached to be involved in the Delphi process. Additionally external stakeholders will be approached to help recruit parents and carers to be involved in the process.

A total of 20 parents and carers and 20 young people will be approached to be included in the Delphi process.

Nominated panel members will be approached and invite letters drafted and sent. The letter will outline the purpose, what will be involved and timeline. All letters will be sent with a 2 week deadline for responses.

13.2. **Select the panel**

Questions will be designed by the lead for the Delphi process; William Whitehouse and sent to RCPCH project manager and the RCPCH participation and advocacy team for comment and revisions.

The questionnaire will follow the same format as the clinical Delphi questionnaire:

- Evidences statement based on original recommendations
- Likert scale for participants to rate agreement
- Space for participants to comment

13.3. **Pilot**

The Delphi questionnaire will be drawn up on MS word and questions agreed between the Delphi working group and participation advocacy team before being uploaded to survey monkey, as per the clinical Delphi questionnaire. The questionnaire will then be piloted with a small group of parents, carers and young people.
13.4. **Delphi rounds**

The Delphi questionnaire will run in parallel with the clinical Delphi questionnaire. There will be two rounds of Delphi with each round lasting for 2 weeks.

Panellists will be given 2 weeks to respond and fill out the clinical questionnaire, and a reminder will be sent after 1 week.

13.5. **Preparing questions for round 2**

Statements that have already reached agree consensus will not be included in round 2. The responses to all questions will be reviewed and the questionnaire for round 2 revised.

This part of the process will be carried out by the Delphi working group with input from the participation advocacy team.

The statistics and comments reviewed by the Delphi working group will be as per section 9 of this document.

13.6. **Reaching a consensus**

Consensus will be reached as per section 11.

A third round will be carried out in the event that consensus is not reached for all statements in round 2. The questions will be prepared as detailed in section 9.

If after round 3 a consensus is still not reached the Delphi working group with input from the participation advocacy team will review the statistics and comments to formulate statements which will be agreed with the guideline development group.