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Guideline adaptation in practice: preliminary results from the evaluation of the use of the ADAPTE framework and process

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Background: Developing and updating high-quality guidelines requires substantial time and resources. To reduce duplication of effort, enhance efficiency and translation of evidence into practice, the ADAPTE collaboration developed a framework composed of a Manual and a Resource Toolkit to guide research teams in the adaptation process of Clinical Practice Guidelines. An evaluation study was launched to test this framework and refine its components.

Purpose: To report the evaluation of the process and tools by the study participants.

Methods: Individuals and organisations interested in the use of the ADAPTE framework registered online and obtained the material (manual and toolkit). Then, along the process, they were invited to complete four questionnaires evaluating their opinions about the proposed methods and tools.

Results: Among 266 registered individuals coming from 226 organisations and 39 countries, 123 evaluated the Manual. Ninety-five (77%) of them were planning to use the ADAPTE framework. A majority of them found the ADAPTE process clear (81%), comprehensive (71%) and feasible (59%), and the Manual useful (72%). However, 21% found the ADAPTE process complex, 41% feared that they will not find appropriate and high-quality source guidelines and 32% feared to meet difficulties in selecting appropriate guidelines. Nevertheless, 88% thought that using the ADAPTE process would provide added value to the guideline development process.

Discussion: The ADAPTE framework and process generated a large interest among guidelines developers. The majority of the organisations/individuals concluded that it could be feasible and useful, although limitations in the process and the quality of source guidelines were expected. This evaluation will help improving the ADAPTE guideline adaptation process and the related support tools.