

BEST PRACTICE IN TRANSGENDER AND GENDER DIVERSE RESEARCH QUALITY ASSESSMENT: A QUALITY TOOL FOR EVALUATING MEANINGFUL COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN TRANS AND GENDER DIVERSE RESEARCH

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Background: It is pivotal to ensure that Transgender communities are appropriately engaged in research involving their communities. For communities themselves, appropriate engagement amplifies their voices and ensures that research is grounded in their needs and perspectives. Methodologically, appropriate community engagement may help overcome common barriers to recruitment, measurement, and interpretation. Despite the rapid growth in research exploring Transgender health, as well as multiple tools available for assessing methodological quality, there are currently no tools available to guide and assess meaningful Transgender community engagement. The aim of this work is to offer one tool, grounded in principles of community based participatory research (CBPR), to help assess prior research and guide future research involving Transgender communities.

Methods: Scoping searches of the literature were conducted to identify relevant best-practice clinical and research guidelines with Transgender communities and CBPR. Key elements were extracted from these guidelines and developed into an initial tool of 21 items. Through iterative piloting and group deliberation, these 21 were reduced to eight items.

Results: The final items reflect important considerations for the evaluation and preparation of research. Three items refer to how the Transgender community were appropriately engaged in the methodology and research design. Five items refer to how Transgender communities were engaged with the analysis, interpretation, and presentation of results involving Transgender communities. Studies are assessed and allocated either a 1 (evident) or a 0 (unclear/no) for each item with a total summed score out of 8.

Conclusion: This checklist offers a poignant point of reflection of how research has previously been conducted. It is not designed to exclude or rank studies. It may also be useful in guiding future research, to ensure that research involving the Transgender community is intentionally designed, to appropriately engage communities in a way that amplifies this community's voice and perspectives.

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