

Factsheet on consensus building methodology (DELPHI)

This document is part of the
**Care Pathways Toolkit for Healthcare
Professionals & Patient Representatives**



WP6 TASK 6.2

JARDIN



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Due to many of the rare conditions being very low prevalence and therefore has a limited published evidence base, the grading of published evidence can be complimented uses a Delphi approach to quantify the experience, expertise and knowledge to define guideline recommendations.

The **DELPHI consensus-building process** is a systematic method used to gather and refine expert opinions to reach a consensus where there are gaps in the published literature when developing a guideline. The process typically follows these steps:

1. **Selection of Experts:** A panel of experts is chosen based on their knowledge and experience related to the topic.
2. **Build recommendations:** draft an outline set of recommendations where there is a gap in the recommendations in the guideline PICO questions due to a lack of published evidence or where the evidence is low quality or conflicting.
3. **First Round of Questionnaires:** Experts are asked to respond to a set of open-ended questions or to rate if they agree or disagree with the outline recommendations and provide a reason. The goal is to gather diverse perspectives.
4. **Summary and Feedback:** The responses are summarized and shared with the experts highlighting areas of agreement and disagreement and reasons behind each viewpoint. The recommendations are updated based on the feedback.
5. **Subsequent Rounds:** Experts are asked to review the updated recommendations, revising their responses or provide further clarification, often in light of the collective feedback from previous rounds. This process helps to narrow down opinions and identify areas of agreement or disagreement.
6. **Reaching Consensus:** The rounds continue until a convergence of opinions is reached, or until the group identifies a clear range of acceptable options. The experts normally meet to discuss any outstanding areas of disagreement, with the aim to find a consensus. The process may stop once a stable consensus emerges.
7. **Final Report:** The results are documented, providing a clear summary of the experts' views and the consensus reached on the issue.

The DELPHI process is iterative and anonymous, which helps reduce the influence of dominant voices and encourages honest and thoughtful input from all participants. It is widely used in decision-making processes where uncertainty exists and a broad range of expert input is needed.



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