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Benefits and harms of general health checks - lifelong learning in general practice: how to read and use scientific literature

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Background & Aim: GPs often experience difficulties in keeping up-to-date, and at times feel they reach the outer boundaries of their knowledge. The practice of medicine in which the busy physician finds, assesses, and implements methods of diagnosis and treatment on the basis of the best available current research, clinical expertise, and combines this with the needs and preferences of the patient, is termed evidence-based medicine. By learning and practising the principles of evidence-based medicine, GPs will have a tool to assist life-long learning in practice. Based on the questions that arise in daily practice, we can learn by doing. Question for workshop exercise: What are the benefits and harms of general health checks? This workshop will invite participants to read the Cochrane review about general health checks and analyse the paper using the method of critical appraisal.

Aim: After this workshop the participants will know the basics of how to read a systematic literature review and interpret a meta-analysis and be able to assess if:

- the research is valid?
- what are the results?
- should we apply the research in our practice?

Method: The didactic method used in the workshop is mostly small group activities with eight participants and two tutors in each group. The participants will receive two scientific papers: the BMJ-version of the Cochrane review about general health checks and a paper about how to read a systematic review. Furthermore, a checklist about which issues in the empirical paper to scrutinise will be posted to the participants.

Program:

Lecture: Welcome and how to work in small groups - 15 minutes (plenary room)

Small groups: critical assessment of the empirical paper - 50 minutes (smaller rooms)

Plenary: Summary and final discussion - 10 minutes (plenary room)

Other considerations: " Minimum of 8 participants, up to 56 participants (Maximum number will depend on the number of rooms available for the workshop).