

# Evidence for international development

The Evidence for Policy and Practice Information and Co-ordinating Centre (EPPI-Centre) is part of the Social Science Research Unit at the Institute of Education, University of London.

Since 1993, we have been at the forefront of carrying out systematic reviews and developing review methods in social science and public policy. We are dedicated to making reliable research findings accessible to the people who need them, whether they are making policy, practice or personal decisions. Our work includes:

## Systematic reviews asking...

- What impact does the provision of separate toilets for girls at school have on their primary and secondary school enrolment, attendance and completion?
- What is the impact of post-abortion family planning counselling and services on women in low-income countries?
- What is the impact of microfinance on poor people in sub-Saharan Africa?
- How does the quality of care compare between private providers and public services in low and middle income countries?

Supporting review centres funded by the Alliance for Health Policy and Systems Research:

- Centre for Systematic Reviews on the Non-state sector, Bangladesh
- Centre for Systematic Reviews on Health Financing, China
- Centre for Systematic Reviews on Human Resources for Health, Uganda
- Methodology Centre for Systematic Reviews of Health Policy and System Research in LMICs, Chile

Supporting review teams funded by:

- Department of International Development
- International Initiative for Impact Evaluation
- AusAID: the Australian Government's overseas aid programme

## Teaching

- Equipping students with knowledge and practical skills for synthesising and using all types of research evidence
- MSc in Evidence for Policy and Practice / Short courses
- Face-to-face and on-line distance learning

## Advancing review methods

- Qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods for systematic reviews

## Working with:

- Alliance for Health Policy and Systems Research to improve international collaboration for synthesizing health systems research
- Campbell Collaboration, as authors and methodologists
- Cochrane Collaboration, as editors, authors, peer reviewers and methodologists
- World Health Organisation, Expert Advisory Panel on Clinical Practice Guidelines and Research Methods and Ethics
- World Health Organisation, Task force on Guidance for Strengthening Health Systems



# Findings from systematic reviews:

Microfinance improves the lives of many clients, but some people are made poorer, and not richer, particularly micro-credit clients. Micro-savings may be a better model than micro-credit because it does not require an increase in income to pay high interest rates and so implications of failure are not so high; further rigorous evaluation is needed.

Stewart R, van Rooyen C, Dickson K, Majoro M, de Wet T (2010) What is the impact of microfinance on poor people? A systematic review of evidence from sub-Saharan Africa. Technical report. London: EPPI-Centre, Social Science Research Unit, University of London.

Post-abortion family planning counselling and services in low-income countries need good quality evaluations measuring outcomes which are important for future programming and policy-making.

Tripney J, Schucan Bird K, Kwan I, Kavanagh J (2010) The impact of post-abortion family planning counselling and services on women in low-income countries: a systematic review of the evidence. Technical report. London: EPPI-Centre, Social Science Research Unit, University of London.

There is a need for well-designed, cluster-randomised trials of separate-sex toilets and wash interventions in schools, conducted in different contexts, where cultural and environmental factors differ in terms of religion and access to water, respectively.

Birdthistle I, Dickson K, Freeman M & L Javidi. What is the impact of separate toilets for girls at schools on girls' educational outcomes? A systematic review of the evidence. Technical report. London: EPPI-Centre, Social Science Research Unit, University of London.

Although data are limited, quality in both provider groups seems poor, with private sector performing better in drug availability and aspects of delivery of care, including responsiveness and effort and may be more client orientated. Strategies seeking to influence quality in both groups are required to improve care delivery and outcomes to the poor, including managing the increasing burden of non-communicable diseases.

Berendes S, Heywood P, Oliver R, Garner P. Quality of private and public ambulatory health care in low and middle income countries: systematic review of comparative studies. Accepted for Plos Medicine.

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