**.Andy Oxman**

**Can you briefly introduce yourself, and give some background on which part of DECIDE your work contributed to?**

I’m Andy Oxman, I’m a researcher at the Norwegian Institute of Public Health formerly at the Norwegian Knowledge Centre for the Health Services. I was a partner in the DECIDE project.

**What are the most important findings from your work with DECIDE?**

I think for the work that the team here in Oslo did together with others, the 3 main products coming out of our work were:

* The interactive Summary of Findings (iSoF), which is a way of improving the presentation of the findings of systematic reviews to different audiences to make it easier for them to access, understand and use that information
* Interactive Evidence to Decision frameworks (EtD), to help people go from evidence to recommendations or decisions
* The GET IT glossary, to help people use plain language and understand terminology that’s used in evidence-informed decision making.

**How has DECIDE changed the way you work?**

It certainly reinforces things and builds on earlier work that we have done. It’s increased my efforts to use plain language in describing what we do, in terms of research findings and in the use of research in making decisions. It’s reinforced the need for flexible presentations to disseminate information to different target audiences, particularly using layered presentations that give people key messages on the top layer and then allow them to dig in deeper with explanations when needed. It’s also reinforced the use of systematic and transparent approaches for me, particularly when considering different factors that can drive decisions.

**How might DECIDE’s work help other guideline groups?**

I think in particular that the interactive EtD tool offers a more structured and transparent approach than current approaches offer when going from evidence to recommendations, including the earlier GRADE approach or approaches like SIGN’s considered judgements. With the current approaches, a lot of the judgements that are made when going from evidence to a recommendation are not transparent and not made systematically. The iEtD helps to ensure consideration of all of the key factors and that important factors aren’t overlooked. This helps to ensure that clear judgements are made about each factor and it’s clear what evidence was used to inform each of those judgements.

**How did you use the DECIDE Evidence to Decision frameworks in real guideline panels?**

I have not personally been on any panels that have used it but I’ve worked with colleagues who have used it both as part of organisations that are responsible for producing guidelines, chairs of guideline committees, technical teams or members of panels and technical team supporting panels. The framework’s been used by WHO, the Swedish Institute of Public Health, the Norwegian Directorate of Health and other organisations, both nationally and internationally. I think that, in general, people who have used the framework have had very positive experiences. A number of people have been put off initially by the appearance of it being more complicated than other approaches, but quickly found that it can, in fact, make the process more efficient.

**Were there any challenges and how did you overcome them?**

People’s initial reactions to the frameworks being complex and perhaps being intimidated or being put off using them. The framework itself was always going to be complex; it’s something that’s inherent in the nature of recommendations or decisions that are being made, it’s not specific to the approach of using the evidence to decision frameworks. We’re not making things complex, they’re complex to begin with and the challenge is to simplify things as much as possible without over-simplifying and ignoring important considerations. We used solutions like introducing the frameworks to panels early on through the use of brief practice runs and clear, informative webinars to help address this problem.

We’ve tried to make it clear that how the frameworks are used is flexible and adaptable to the specific circumstances of the panel and nature of the recommendations that they are making. The framework doesn’t require that panels necessarily do systematic reviews for each factor or criterion, or even consider each factor; you may be ready to make a recommendation after considering a single factor. For example, if a problem is not a priority - such as cervical cancer screening for young women when the risk is less than one in one hundred thousand, maybe one in a million - you could decide based on that criterion alone that it doesn’t make sense to screen woman for cervical cancer at that age without going on to other criteria. So you don’t necessarily need to look at every criterion and you don’t necessarily need to collect evidence for every criterion, but it makes it clear what you have and haven’t done and what information you have used to inform the judgements that you have made in relation to the criteria that are relevant for a particular recommendation or decision.

**What do you think is the single biggest benefit of using the framework?**

I think probably transparency; that it makes it clear what factors were considered, what evidence was used to inform the judgement about each factor and what the judgement was about each factor, and which factors in the end drove the recommendation or decision.

**How did you develop the look and feel of interactive summary of findings tables?**

Like all of the products coming out of the DECIDE project, it was an iterative user-centred design approach that was used. We began with brain-storming about the problems and challenges and their possible solutions, then followed with consultation. For example, we had an advisory group of diverse international people who were involved in policymaking and had methodological expertise. We surveyed policymakers, prototyped and user tested those prototypes; getting feedback, redesigning and then repeating the cycle.

**Were there any challenges and how did you overcome them?**

Part of that process is you anticipate finding lots of things that don’t work, that’s the whole purpose of the process. We came up with lots of things that didn’t work and then came up with alternative solutions, for example we found out for the iSoF that the introduction didn’t work and a lot of people didn’t discover many of the features that they could use to help them to understand the information, and we tried several different ways of presenting that help and introduction. The key solution there, in the end, was to simplify the interface and minimise the need for any sort of instruction, so that the ways in which you could interact with the iSoF was much more obvious right from the beginning.

**What do you think in the single biggest benefit of using an interactive summary of findings table?**

It’s the flexibility and ability to minimise the initial presentation without leaving out important information, in other words the layered presentation that allows you to show findings with the minimum amount of information for any target audience but then behind that you have additional information in an accessible format for those that need it, whether that’s explanations for an audience that doesn’t have a research background, or more detailed judgements for an audience that wants to understand more clearly what was behind the judgements that were made.