

Request for Expression of Interest

Evidence synthesis for Evidence-based Guidelines on Empirical use of antibiotic for **Meningitis, Acute intra-abdominal infections, and Skin & soft tissues infections**: conducting systematic reviews/meta-analyses

BACKGROUND:

1. A novel process has been instituted within the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare to collaboratively formulate a comprehensive set of evidence-based guidelines for the country. This initiative will involve the concerted efforts of the Department of Health & Family Welfare (DoHFW), the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), and the Department of Health Research (DHR) using a rigorous and robust scientific process, ensuring the integration of the latest evidence.
2. The process of generating such evidence will entail the compilation of systematic reviews and meta-analyses from the existing literature, focusing on well-defined review questions. The evidence derived from these systematic reviews and meta-analyses will be systematically assessed for its strength utilizing the GRADE (Grading of Recommendations Assessment, Development, and Evaluation) Approach. This grading methodology will serve to evaluate the quality of evidence, which will subsequently inform the formulation of recommendations following the application of the Evidence to Decision (EtD) framework.
3. In light of this, Expressions of Interest (EoI) are invited from researchers who are interested in conducting systematic reviews and meta-analyses. Prospective applicants will be tasked to conduct systematic reviews/meta-analysis pertaining to the identified review questions (PICOs) and assessing the quality of evidence using GRADE tool.

SCOPE OF WORK:

Systematic reviews and meta-analyses play a crucial role in synthesizing existing evidence to inform decision-making for empirical use of antibiotics in different clinical conditions. The systematic review teams will be commissioned to conduct rigorous evaluations of the available literature on specific review questions (PICOs) identified by the Guideline Development Groups of antibiotic guidelines.

ICMR invites researchers/academicians/scientists to express interest for conducting systematic reviews/meta-analysis for the generating evidence on review questions pertaining to empirical

use of antibiotics in Meningitis, Acute intra-abdominal infection, and Skin & Soft tissues infections. The review questions are divided into following scopes as mentioned below:

- 1. When to start the empirical antibiotics?**
- 2. Which class of antibiotics to start empirically?**
- 3. When to stop empirical antibiotics?**
- 4. When to change antibiotics?**

The selected systematic review teams will receive detailed PICO framework for the question(s) assigned. Depending on the scope of the review, a team may be assigned more than one review question.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA:

- The proposal can be submitted through the Google form link provided and are open to professionals, scientists (including ICMR), faculty who have regular employment in Medical Institutes/ Research Institutes/ Universities/ Colleges (documentary evidence of their recognition including DSIR certificate should be available).
- The Principal Investigator must have published at least 2 systematic reviews as first/corresponding author in PubMed indexed journals in relevant subject areas mentioned above (PMID of the articles must be mentioned).
- Applicants must demonstrate proficiency in utilizing systematic review methodologies, including conducting comprehensive literature searches, critically appraising study quality, synthesizing evidence, and applying appropriate statistical techniques for meta-analysis
- The team must include a minimum of one subject expert, methodologist/systematic review expert and statistician.
- Applicants must commit to adhering to ethical standards and best practices in research conduct, including transparency, objectivity, and integrity throughout the systematic review process.

DELIVERABLES:

- Technical protocol for conducting systematic reviews and meta-analyses, including a detailed description of search strategy, inclusion/exclusion criteria, data extraction sheet, plan for evidence quality (certainty) assessment using GRADE tool and statistical analysis for meta-analysis.
- Presentation of the review findings at the expert group meetings and participation in any pre-meetings or online webinars to discuss methodology and preliminary results.
- Preparation of a GRADEPro summary of evidence profiles, providing comprehensive ratings of the certainty of evidence for each outcome assessed with clear explanations for each rating.

- A file containing all studies included in the systematic reviews, including relevant study characteristics and extracted data
- Submission of a finalized report summarizing the systematic review process, key findings, and evidence profiles.
- Co-authored paper for publication

TIMELINES:

Total Duration: 03 months

As this is a highly time sensitive issue, it is desirable that the commissioned review **MUST** be completed in stipulated time.

APPLICATION PROCESS:

- Interested Researchers/ faculty having **required capability, experience and resources** to undertake the assignment should fill out the Google form at the below link and submit an Expression of Interest (EOI).
- The application received will go through a review process by an expert committee constituted by competent authority.
- The last date of submission of the EoI is **31 August 2024 (5:00 pm) (Saturday)**.
- The selected participants will be intimated by email and on ICMR website in September 2024.
- The link to submit the application is through Google Form: <https://forms.gle/APz4baYVC3QFkpqX6>

BUDGET:

Financial Support up to ₹ 5 Lacs will be provided to all non-ICMR Institutes. ICMR institutes may take support from the intramural funding.

In-charge:

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