

Focus Groups: a Method of Dialogue Between Clinicians and Research

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Focus groups are a qualitative research tool, firstly designed to explore effects of films and television programs to viewers as well as the effect of preventive health messages. The method is widely used to investigate patient experiences in relation to their disease and their contacts with health. The method has also been found to be helpful for the exploration of the attitudes of care providers and their resistance to some. It helps to understand the patient and the caregiver and to explore new research areas which can then be further investigated by quantitative methods.

There are three main reasons why this method is advantageous in the development of a guideline.

1/ in order to keep the guideline in line with the needs and the constraints of the clinicians and the patients.

2/ to increase the implementation of the guideline.

3/ to gather expert opinions and best practices. This is especially important when a topic is largely unexplored.

Until recently there was no guideline for the screening, diagnosis and treatment of attention deficit / hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) in patients with a substance use disorder (SUD). The aim was to develop such a guideline, starting out from a systematic review and based on the methodology of the Scottish Intercollegiate Guideline Network (SIGN). Due to the lack of scientific evidence on some of the topics, the guideline is a combination of evidence based and practice based recommendations.