

Chapter 3.5 Determining the research question

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Further reading

1. Clarke M, Allen C, Archer F, Wong D, Eriksson A, Puri J (2014). What evidence is available and what is required, in humanitarian assistance? 3ie Scoping Paper 1. New Delhi: International Initiative for Impact Evaluation (3ie). 2014. https://www.3ieimpact.org/sites/default/files/2019-01/3ie_scoping_paper_1-humanitarian-top.pdf (accessed 22 February 2022).

Summary of this document: This scoping paper provides information that should help researchers and others who wish to identify topics in the humanitarian sector that are likely to benefit from new research (in particular, impact evaluations). It is based on a study that used an online survey and semi-structured interviews with experts from the humanitarian sector to identify their evidence needs and mapped these needs to available evidence. The reported data were collected between November 2013 and February 2014.

In this scoping paper, the authors provide an independent analysis of the evidence base of evaluations in humanitarian assistance and identifies key gaps and priorities in need of rigours evidence. The evidence gaps were formulated from the results of surveying and interviewing humanitarian experts. The authors conclude that further operational research and impact evaluation efforts can identify additional humanitarian research evidence gaps.

2. Sigfrid L, Moore C, Salam AP, Maayan N, Hamel C, Garritty C, et al. A rapid research needs appraisal methodology to identify evidence gaps to inform clinical research priorities in response to outbreaks — results from the Lassa fever pilot. *BMC Medicine*. 2019; 17:107.

Summary of this document: This journal article provides a methodology for a rapid research needs appraisal which could be used by researchers and others to quickly identify important evidence gaps that might be filled by new studies. It illustrates the method with a pilot exercise for Lassa fever.

In this short article, the authors describe a method for conducting rapid research needs appraisal (RRNA) of existing evidence within 5 days in response to outbreaks globally, with the aim to inform clinical research prioritization. The authors conclude that rapid needs assessments can be successfully executed within five days, provided sufficient resources and personnel expertise.