

How to ask an answerable question for health care
and health research: a workshop for consumers
Thursday 20 Oct, 14:00-15:30h

Kay Dickersin

Nancy Fitton

Ann Fonfa

Catherine McIlwaine

Maryann Napoli

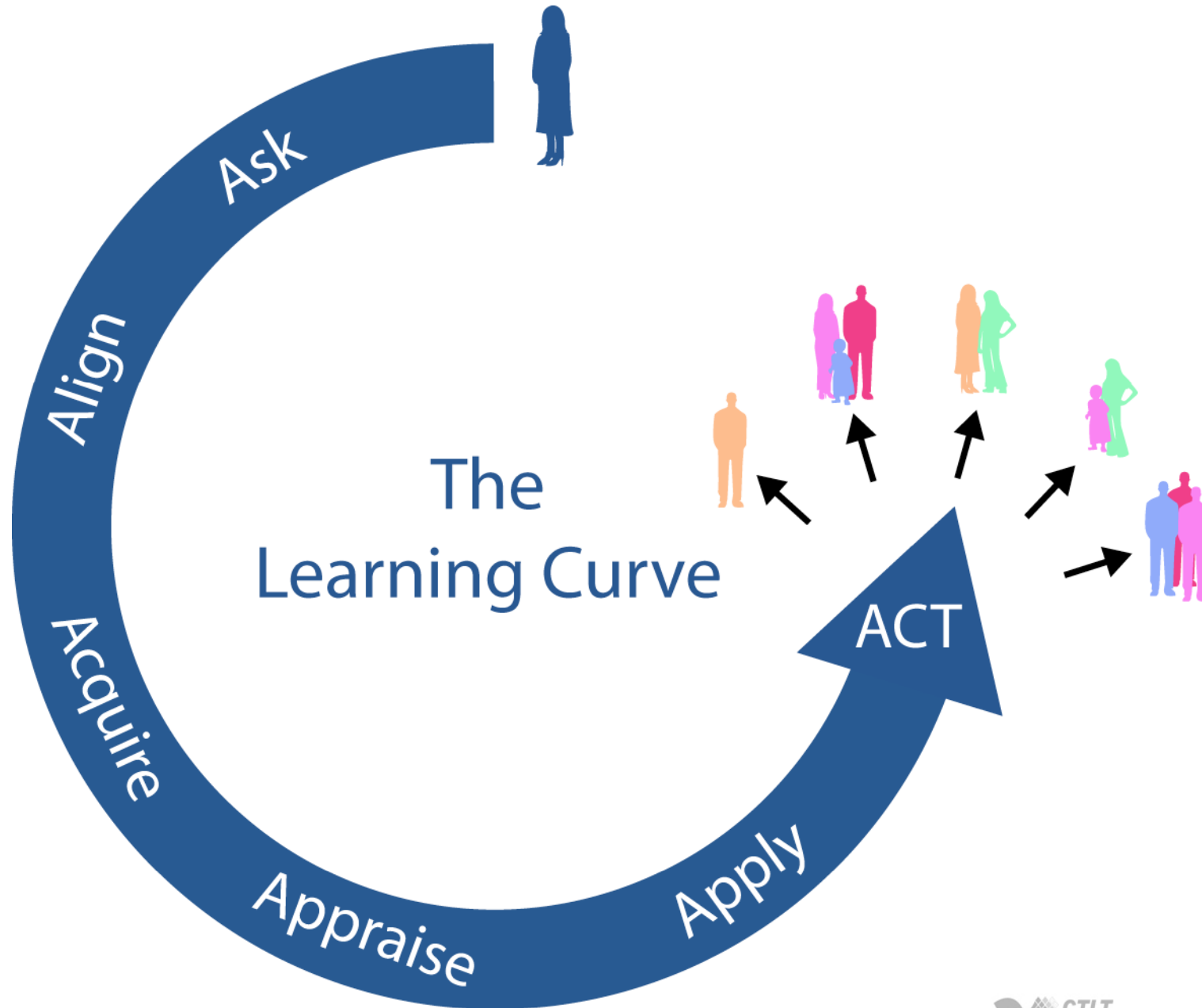
Ming Ming Zhang

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Healthcare Research and Quality

Agenda

- Introductions – 5 min
- Slides – 20 min
 - ▶ What is the problem?
 - ▶ Asking an answerable question.
 - ▶ Q and A
- Small groups - 30 min
 - ▶ Divide into pairs + facilitator
 - ▶ Reword 5 questions on handout with your group
- Report back – 15 min
- Discussion – 10 min
- Evaluation - 10 min

Understanding EBHC: A Foundation for Action



What is the problem?

- Consumers asked to join review groups, peer review systematic reviews, suggest questions for topic prioritization.
- Consumers may not know how to formulate questions properly so their questions don't get asked.
- The point of consumer involvement is to obtain their perspective, so we want consumer questions and topics included.

Classifying question types: Overview

Question	Classification/Type
How can this problem be prevented?	Prevention
Will detecting this problem early, before symptoms, make a difference in my health?	Screening
What should be done to treat this problem?	Therapy
Will there be any negative effects (of an intervention)?	Harm
How good is this test at detecting this problem?	Diagnostic accuracy
What is the likely outcome of this problem?	Prognosis
What proportion of the population is newly diagnosed with this problem each year?	Incidence
What proportion of the population is currently living with this problem?	Prevalence
What causes this problem?	Etiology

Classifying question types: Intervention questions

Question	Classification/Type
How can this problem be prevented?	Prevention
Will detecting this problem early, before symptoms, make a difference in my health?	Screening
What should be done to treat this problem?	Therapy
Will there be any negative effects (of an intervention)?	Harm

Not intervention questions

Questions submitted to AHRQ for systematic reviews

1. What is the percentage of acute inflammation among appendices removed for acute abdominal pain that are microscopically validated ?
2. What is the indication for IVC filter placement amongst different ethnicities?
3. What has been learned about people with CP and their later motor status (into young adulthood), as measured by the Gross Motor Function Classification System for Cerebral Palsy (GMFCS)?
4. What we can learn from children with autism exiting the school system (many of whom did not have intensive early intervention)? What can we do for them going forward? How can we prepare for the increased number of people with autism who will soon be adults?

An intervention question, but....

- What can I take to feel better?
 - ▶ Needs a description of what's wrong and to whom the question applies
 - ▶ Needs information about options to be considered
 - ▶ Needs description of the outcome being sought

- What's wrong with this question?

Components of an “answerable” clinical question

P Patients or populations

I Intervention/exposure

C Comparison group(s)

O Outcome

Formulating the question

Types of people (P)

- ▶ Define condition or disease, including explicit diagnostic criteria
- ▶ Population and setting of interest (age, race, sex, community, hospital, outpatient)

Types of *interventions* or exposures (I)

- ▶ What? (treatment, diagnostic, preventive, other?)
- ▶ When? How often?
- ▶ How? (Pills? Injection? Counseling?)
- ▶ Dose?
- ▶ For how long?

Formulating the question (cont'd)

Types of comparison groups (C)

- ▶ For trials:
 - Placebo
 - Standard therapy
 - No treatment

Outcomes of interest (O)

- ▶ Important to consumers, provider

Examples:

- Symptom relief
- Cure
- Length of survival
- Behavior change

Example: A Well-Formulated Question

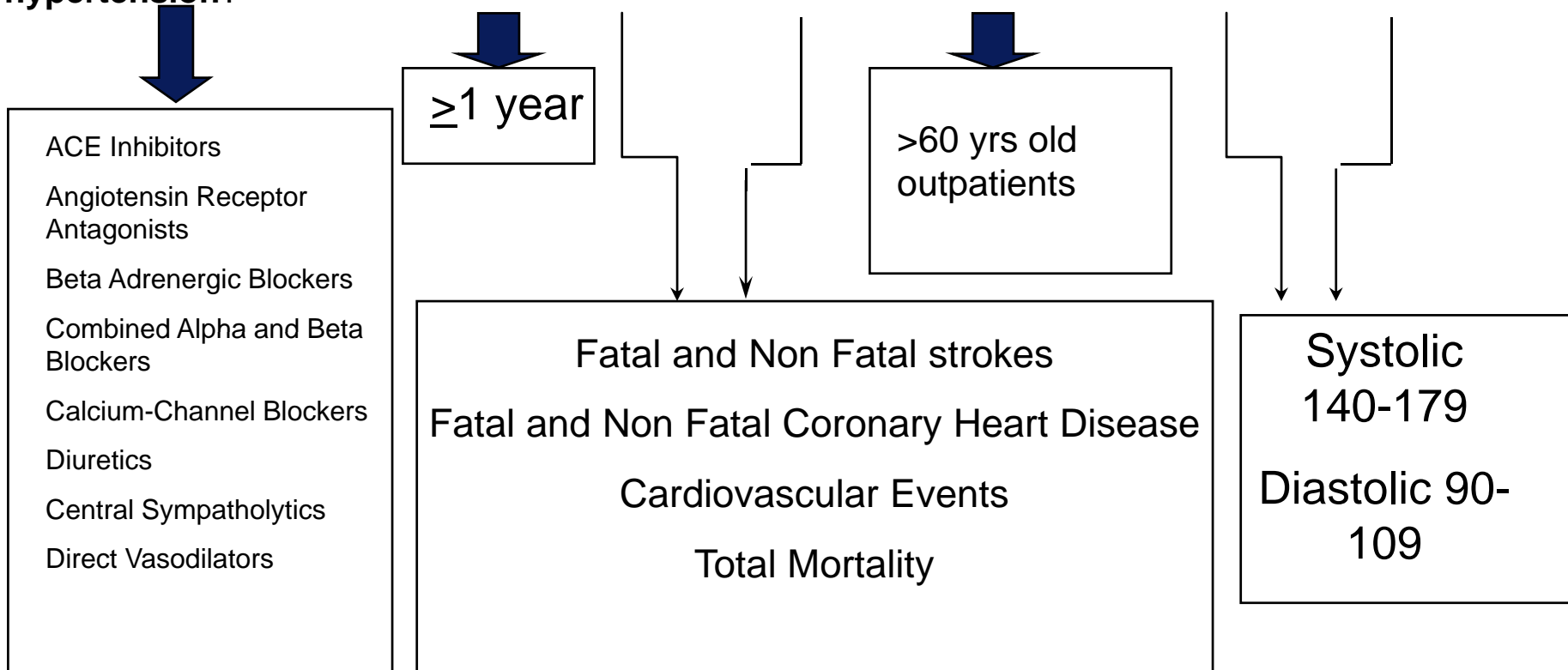
Intervention

Outcomes

Population
Setting

Condition
of Interest

Is **drug therapy** associated w/ **long-term morbidity and mortality** in **older persons** with **moderate hypertension**?



Example: A Well-Formulated Question

Intervention

Outcome

Setting

Population

Do **exercise** interventions prevent **falls** in **community dwelling** or **institutionalized people**?

Balance Training
Mobility Training
Physical Therapy
Strength Training
Thai Chi

Outcomes:

Number of falls
Injurious falls
Hospitalization
Fracture
Death

≥65 yrs old
outpatients
Community care
Institutional care
Nursing homes

Now let's practice

Our advocacy group is provides advice on drug safety. We are trying to get the scoop on the COX-2 inhibitors: Have side effects been found with all drugs in the class? What is the size of the side effect problem? Do the cardiovascular side effects only apply to a subgroup of patients or are there some for whom the risk is very low?

Asking an answerable question – COX 2 inhibitors

- How effective are COX-2 inhibitors in relieving pain and is there associated harm?
 - ▶ People = individuals with pain
 - ▶ Intervention = drugs in the COX 2 inhibitor class (Vioxx, Celebrex, xyz, xyz)
 - ▶ Outcomes = pain relief, adverse events

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