



The James Lind Alliance
"Tackling treatment uncertainties"

James Lind Alliance **Another way of thinking**

The Research Cycle

Is it a cycle or a train?

Cycle .. A series of events that are regularly repeated in the same order

Train .. A series of connected events

Overview.

The James Lind Alliance (JLA) is often asked to explain where and how its process fits within the "Research Cycle".

In this document we offer an illustration of the JLA view – and provide an outline against which other organisations can "colour in" their interactions and consider their impact.

Where to start

1. There are as many variances of the description of a Research Cycle as there are organisations that produce them.
 - a. It is likely that each description is, in some way, biased to the needs and aspirations of that organisation – and this JLA offering is no different
 - b. There is no "Gold Standard" Research Cycle – as for example there is with a double blind randomised placebo controlled trial
 - c. When different published Cycles are compared and an attempt is made to combine them you can be left with a complex grid which is far less than the sum of the parts
2. The phrase "Research Cycle" is convenient and the pictorial circle of a virtuous circle is attractive – but, in reality there are many times where the circle never joins back to the start.
 - a. This document suggests more of a "Research Train" approach with a series of stations, which not only describe a logical route, but also means that different interested parties can join and leave the journey at different places.
 - b. This pictorial approach also allows those joining at mid-way stages to understand what they may have missed out on by not being part of the earlier journey and its stages.
 - c. It should also identify the proper limits of an organisations interaction and influence.
3. The starting point of many published research cycles differ – and this is a true reflection of reality
 - a. An identified uncertainty
 - b. A novel idea
 - c. A hypothesis about an existing treatment
 - d. A hunch
 - e. Public pressure
 - f. Funding Bodies grant opportunities (have they originated from stages a. - e. above?)
 - g. Commercial interests
4. This journey starts at Station 1 by identifying the condition to be researched – reflecting that for many good economic and political reasons, Government and others will set their own priorities for ranking "conditions" to be reviewed.

The Research Journey

Station	Description	Potential Parties	Notes
1	Define the Condition	Patients, Clinicians, Public, Government	Who is better placed to determine the condition to be researched than Patients and Clinicians?
2	Build a Team	JLA / Patients and Clinicians	Need to be balanced and not tokenistic on any part
3	Ascertain Uncertainties	JLA / Patients and Clinicians	Who better than patient and clinician groups to seek guidance from as wide a membership as possible?
4	Collate Uncertainties and Test	JLA / DUETs	A robust, trusted and independent resource to ensure that “uncertainties” are known uncertainties and not unknown certainties.
5	Schedule Uncertainties and share	JLA / Patients and Clinicians	Independent facilitation at the important sifting stage
6	Prioritise and Fashion Uncertainties	JLA / Patients and Clinicians –	Within an independent and transparent JLA process involving Patients and Clinicians. Uncertainties to be then “fashioned” into ways that appeal / speak to potential funders
7	Funding Commissioned	Patients and Clinicians working with Researchers	Funders to be fully aware of what is a priority for those who are experiencing the effects of uncertainties
8	Design and Manage	Researchers working with Patients and Clinicians	Because Patients and Clinicians have been involved from the early stages they should be committed to the work and also support the Researchers in their quest for funding
9	Undertake Research	Researchers working with Patients and Clinicians	Because Patients and Clinicians have been involved from the early stages it could be expected that Trial recruitment should be easier.
10	Analyse and Interpret	Researchers	Using Patients and Clinicians to determine their important outcomes
11	Disseminate and Feedback	Researchers working with Patients and Clinicians	
12	Implement	Clinicians working with patients.	
13	Monitor and Evaluate	Researchers working with Patients and Clinicians	

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The Research Train Journey

What stations is your organisation involved with? (Colour in “your” squares)

JLA

Does this indicate that you should be working in partnership with other organisations?

Are you missing out on important stations?

