

# A Tool for Evidence-Based Decision-Making

## A Taxonomy of Interventions Directed at Consumers to Promote Evidence-Based Prescribing and Drug Use

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**Safe and appropriate medication use** is a primary goal for health policy makers worldwide. Strategies to change prescribing practices of health care professionals are often first investigated and implemented to improve drug use. But **changing and supporting consumer behaviours** is a key component to promoting optimal and appropriate drug use. Many strategies exist to change and support consumer behaviours related to drug use.

### STATE OF RESEARCH

Currently, evidence about these strategies can be found in trials in large databases from multiple disciplines, on the Internet, and in government and other policy publications. It has not been systematically assembled or synthesised previously, which presents a major challenge for decision makers who need to find and use evidence on prescribing and drug use for consumers. Without an organisation of this literature, it **can be difficult for policy makers to determine which interventions exist, which interventions work, which do not, and where evidence is lacking.**

### DEVELOPING THE TAXONOMY

As part of a larger project, the **Cochrane Effective Practice and Organisation of Care** and the **Cochrane Consumers and Communication Groups** worked together to produce the taxonomy. A rigorous search of the literature for systematic reviews of the effectiveness of interventions to improve drug use by consumers, and a search for initiatives worldwide to improve drug use were conducted. The taxonomy used by the Cochrane Consumers and Communication Group to organise interventions and outcomes for consumer interactions with health care was also used as a basis for this taxonomy.

### PRINCIPLES BEHIND THE TAXONOMY

Interventions to improve drug use by consumers are not only about improving adherence to medications. The taxonomy is meant to capture a large range of interventions that place the consumer centrally as a decision maker and manager of medicines. It includes interventions such as informed decision making, the acquisition of skills and knowledge to successfully manage treatment with medicines, increased consumer participation in the health care system and research, etc.

The taxonomy includes **interventions that promote consumers, patients and carers who are** more knowledgeable and competent, able to express their views and beliefs, able to make treatment and healthy behaviour choices alone or with health professionals, supported or supportive, able to minimise their risks and harms, able to access high quality information and quality health services, and able to participate in planning, service improvement and research.

### Taxonomy of Interventions directed at consumers

Category	Definition	Examples
Providing information or education	Strategies to enable consumers to know about their treatment and their health.	Classroom sessions, lectures, distribution of brochures
Facilitating communication and decision making	Strategies to involve consumers in decision-making about medicines.	One to one consultation with pharmacists, delayed prescriptions
Acquiring skills and competencies	Strategies that focus on the acquisition of skills relevant to drug use.	Self management courses, training for correct dosing
Supporting behaviour change	Interventions which focus on the adoption or promotion of health behaviours and treatment behaviours	Counseling to overcome obstacles to drug use
Support	Interventions which provide assistance and encouragement to help consumers to cope with and manage their health and ongoing medication use.	Family counseling, motivation
Minimising risks or harms	Strategies to prevent or manage adverse events of treatment and complications of disease.	Teaching self monitoring for home, delayed prescriptions
Improving quality	Interventions to improve the total package of care, the coordination of care, or the integration of care delivered.	Financial incentives for filling prescriptions
Consumer system participation	Interventions to involve consumers and/or carers in decision-making processes on prescribing and drug use at a system level.	Consumer involvement in setting research priorities for policy

### TAXONOMY IN USE

The taxonomy was not developed only as a theoretical research framework to map the literature. The taxonomy is organised according to the aims of the interventions. It highlights the **range of interventions available and under research** to change and support appropriate and safe drug use by and for consumers.

It is being used as an organised entry point for systematic reviews of interventions of relevance to prescribing for and drug use by consumers in the Canadian Agency for Drugs and Technologies in Health **COMPUS Interventions Database**. The taxonomy makes it easier for decision makers to find evidence about the effectiveness of those interventions to improve drug use by and prescribing for consumers.

The screenshot shows the 'Interventions Database' website. At the top, there is a search bar and navigation links: Home, Contact Us, Search, Database, Feedback. Below this, there are several menu items: ABOUT, KNOWLEDGE, HEALTH TECHNOLOGY, COMMON, CANADIAN OPTIMAL MEDICATION, CARE, ASSESSMENT, DRUG REVIEW, PRESCRIBING & UTILIZATION SERVICES. A sidebar on the right contains links for Media Centre, Events, Careers, Subscribe, and Resources. The main content area is titled 'Interventions Database' and includes a description: 'The Interventions Database summarizes current research evidence about the effects of strategies to improve drug prescribing practice and drug use. This database houses summaries of key findings from systematic reviews that evaluate the effects of strategies targeting professionals, the organization of health care, and consumers.' Below this, there is a section for 'Interventions that affect drug use by and prescribing for consumers' with a list of categories: Providing information or education, Supporting behaviour change, Supporting skills and competencies, Support, Facilitating communication and decision making, Minimising risks or harms, Improving quality, and Consumer system participation.