

The value of an Expert Advisory Group: Exploration of barriers and facilitators within the ROADMAP international big data project

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Background

The ROADMAP project brings together public and private sector partners from across Europe with the aim of optimising the use of real-world evidence to improve outcomes for people with Alzheimer's disease (AD).

Regulatory and Health Technology Assessment (HTA) engagement is a key component of the ROADMAP project with the aim of ensuring that project outputs are of high scientific quality and are applicable across various European Market access frameworks. To facilitate this engagement, an Expert Advisory Group (EXAG) was established comprising of 7 individual experts with regulatory and HTA expertise from different European countries. The EXAG provides a forum for discussion and gives project leads the opportunity to receive feedback from a regulatory and HTA perspective on specific outputs and activities. EXAG meetings are held virtually or in-person approximately every 3 months.

Objectives

The aim of this research was to evaluate the EXAG as a mechanism to support expert feedback into the ROADMAP project and to assess the impact of this feedback on ROADMAP outputs and activities.

Methods

An online survey was undertaken with members of the EXAG and members of the ROADMAP project consortium. Both closed and open questions were included. Invitations to complete the survey were distributed in June 2018 via email with a reminder at 2 weeks.

Results and discussion

Responses were received from 25 consortium members from across 26 partner organisations, and from 5 members of the EXAG.

Experiences of EXAG meetings and plans for futures meetings were reported (Figure 1; Table 1), as well as views on the different roles of the EXAG (Figure 2) and the influence it has had on project outputs and activities (Figure 3). A numbers of areas for improvement and of best practice were also identified (Table 2).

Table 1. Benefits of presenting at EXAG meetings

Increased understanding of the perspective of regulators/HTA/payers about specific questions and areas of work
Validation and endorsement of current strategies
Provision of feedback to shape future work

Table 2. Areas for improvement and best practice

Improvement	Best practice
Meeting length and frequency , particularly the need for more frequent face-to face meetings	Mix of competences and perspectives from across the regulatory and HTA landscape
Scheduling of meetings to meet all stakeholders' needs	Right size of group to allow for focused activity and discussion
Open Q&A sessions for all observers	Challenging discussions between experts and project partners
Less regimented virtual meetings to allow for more open discussion	
Broader EXAG membership to reflect the perspectives of more European countries	

Implications

The EXAG is a successful and valued format for engaging with a multi-disciplinary, pan-European group of experts within the ROADMAP project. It provides a forum for discussion and the opportunity for project leads to gain regulatory/HTA perspectives on project outputs and activities.

The findings of this research have facilitated improvements to expert engagement in the current project and will provide key learning points for expert engagement in similar projects and for the establishment and governance of future expert groups/committees.

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Figure 1. Experiences of EXAG meetings

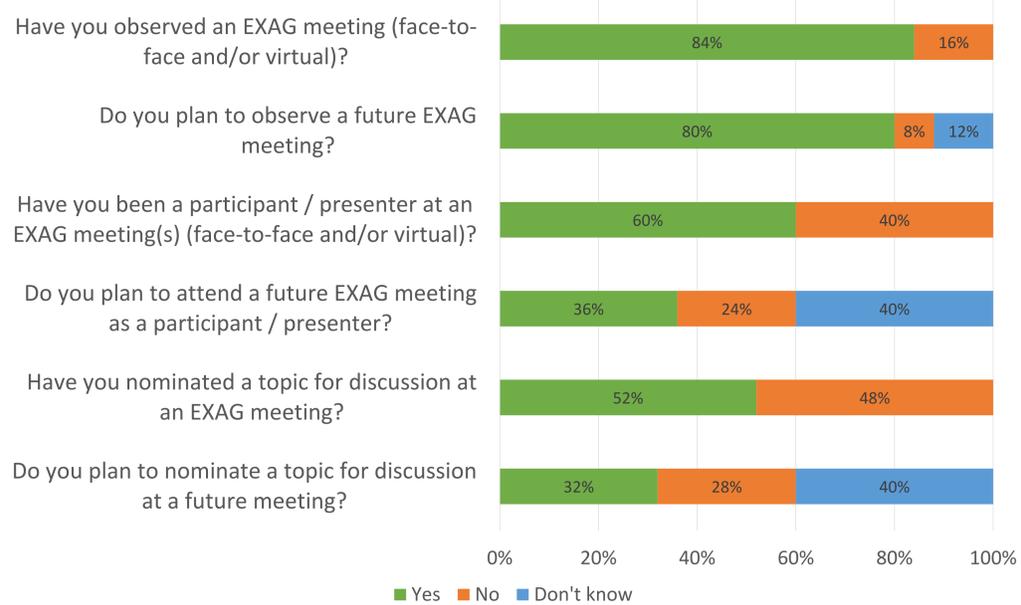


Figure 2. The different roles for which the EXAG was established

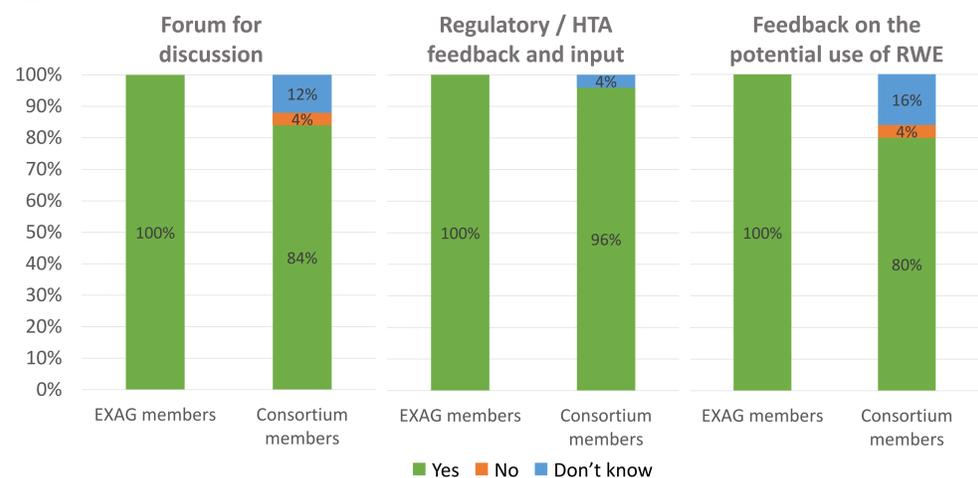


Figure 3. The influence of the EXAG on project outputs/activities

