Living Evidence Insights

*Keeping evidence **alive** to better serve decision-makers*

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An unprecedented moment for living evidence

More than a decade ago, the concept of living evidence was conceived as an emerging opportunity to keep systematic reviews current as new evidence becomes available, and as a potential effort in contributing to closing the gap between research and practice[1]. A lot has happened since then, including the huge disruption that the COVID-19 pandemic entailed for the world of evidence production[2]. As the article about living evidence production will show, living evidence was significantly accelerated during the COVID-19 pandemic, but its production grew more than thirteen-fold after 2020. Today the Living Evidence Atlas records 580 efforts conducted across 50 different countries.

The rationale for the use of living evidence has not changed much since then. Decision-makers rarely have time to wait for evidence, and decision-making needs constantly evolve over time. In more recent years, we have seen significant efforts to reshape the global evidence infrastructure, with living evidence much closer to its core. Global calls to strengthen and better coordinate global evidence infrastructure[3] have built the case for substantial investments in this field, including the recommendations made by the Evidence Synthesis Infrastructure Collaborative (ESIC)[4].

Alive was launched in late 2023 as a community effort to change evidence systems through the production and use of living evidence. This included the establishment of the Alive Learning Forum, which has grown into a community of more than a thousand members across six continents.

All of this is happening at a time when Artificial Intelligence (AI) is dramatically lowering the cost of both producing evidence syntheses as well as keeping them current[5,6], and when the possibilities of reusing evidence that has been built once have become a true reality for evidence producers[7].

Why Living Evidence Insights, and why now

Given this context of substantial change and testing, as well as the significant opportunities and risks of AI in evidence production and uses, we are launching the ***Living Evidence Insights*** to take stock of what we have learned together, to share what is working and what is not working, and to connect people building living evidence initiatives across very different settings. This version of the Living Evidence Insights includes five sections.

Section 1 describes the current state of living evidence production, using the Living Evidence Atlas and the new Living Evidence

Equity Monitor to show who produces living evidence, on what topics, and where. This section shows how living evidence production is highly concentrated in the Global North, and that nine in ten efforts address health topics. Efforts need not only grow, but need to do so in a more equitable way.

Section 2 is a compilation of discussion papers written by Alive Learning Forum speakers, mostly based in the Global South. Charles Gachoki (Mizizi Elimu Afrika, Kenya) presents the Unlocking Data Initiative. Tamara Lotfi (3ie, Lebanon) writes on the Development Evidence Portal and the COVID-19 living guidelines of recommendations. Ariel Izcovich (Pan American Health Organization, Argentina) writes about the rapid living evidence synthesis of COVID-19 drugs produced during the pandemic[8]. María José Oliveros (Universidad de La Frontera, Chile) writes on her research about the changes in the certainty of the evidence when new updates are released. Silvia Nicté Villatoro (UNED, Colombia) and Jessica Farías (HubLAC team, Brazil) write on living evidence efforts conducted in Latin America and the Caribbean. Patrick Mbah Okwen and Alang Ernest Wung (eBASE Africa, Cameroon) write on their experiences in conducting multiple living evidence syntheses for the African region.

Section 3 describes Alive and its partnerships, showing how Alive has convened several partnerships, summarising activity across HPV, DESTINY, and other partnerships.

Section 4 presents ten key insights from the Alive Learning Forum and internal learning from the Alive team. While trust is a key connector enabling multiple efforts, evidence intermediation is an active ingredient, and structure and flexibility can work together to increase the impact of living evidence.

Finally, in the last section, **Looking ahead**, Ruth Stewart, the Director of Alive, reflects on what the year has shown and what it means for the future of living evidence. We hope this publication contributes to collective learning across this evolving field. We invite you to read it and share what resonates and what you are learning that differs from what has been shared here. Living evidence is always responsive, and so is our learning.

References

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