

Summary of All Activities Overseen by The Engaging Working Group From April 22, 2020 – Nov. 19, 2021

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HEALTH FORUM



The Ottawa
Hospital
Centre for Implementation
Research

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The Engaging Working Group (EWG)

- *“The Engaging Working Group (EWG) brings together and engages with institutions and people supporting decision-makers (including patients and citizens) to share information, tools and resources in a centralized manner to facilitate timely responses to decision makers’ needs”*

Terms of References

- Identify evidence synthesis groups (including technology assessment and guideline groups) and evidence hubs that are contributing to the COVID-19 response (building from the list of evidence sources and centres developed by the Africa Centre for Evidence and McMaster Health Forum)
- Develop and communicate messages to these groups about how to leverage existing evidence-related data (e.g., daily search data) and processes (e.g., protocol registration)
- Canvass input from these evidence synthesis groups – [through a joint listserv](#) – for additional ideas for how to work more collaboratively as an evidence synthesis community, both within and across ‘divides’ (e.g., quantitative and qualitative synthesis, health and social sciences)

Terms of References (cont'd)

- Develop approaches to manually capture evidence syntheses, technology assessments and guidelines that are not housed on portals being prioritized by the Digitizing working group (e.g., biweekly website reviews)
- Identify and engage a broader array of groups (e.g., data analytics, modelling, implementation science, and monitoring and evaluation, horizon scanning / foresight) that need to have access to the best evidence sources for their current COVID-19-related work as well as for policies and practice post-COVID-19
- Review on a quarterly basis and suggest improvements to COVID-END's citizen-partnership strategy and related activities and to how COVID-END's and the Engaging working group's outreach is reaching citizen and patient groups

Recruitment of EWG Members

- First meeting held on April 30, 2020
- Founding working group members
 - *Laurenz Langer – Africa Centre for Evidence (Co-chair)*
 - *Maureen Dobbins – National Collaborating Centre for Methods and Tools (NCCMT) (Co-chair)*
 - *Lesley Stewart, Centre for Reviews and Dissemination (PROSPERO), UK*
 - *Sylvia de Haan, Cochrane Central*
 - *Jennifer Yost – Villanova University*
 - *Per Olav Vandvik – MAGIC Evidence Ecosystem Foundation, Norway*
 - *Kamga Emmanuel Berinyuy – Effective Basic Services, Africa*
 - *Sandy Oliver – EPPI - Centre, UK.*

Core Focus: Synergy & Engagement

■ WHY?

- To synergize with other organizations currently supporting decision-makers, reduce duplication of efforts, promote knowledge sharing and best practices with other evidence groups contributing to the COVID-19 response

Core Focus: Synergy & Engagement (cont'd)

- How?
 - Identifying evidence groups contributing to the COVID-19 response, and leveraging their existing networks and communication channels
 - Creating an online community of practise.
 - The JISCMail listserv was chosen to host the COVID-END online community among others, e.g., HIFA, Email lists, LinkedIn, ResearchGate.
 - Creating a list of stakeholders contributing to the COVID-19 response
 - Reaching out to the various stakeholders to promote the COVID-END online community within their networks
 - Engaging with these stakeholders supporting decision-makers

Outcome

- Creation of the COVID-END listserv on June 22, 2020, with 12 founding members
- Key contacts within 23 evidence groups were engaged to promote the listserv
- Progress was recorded using an outreach tracker
- 74% of the key contacts signified an interest to participate in the online community and spread the word within their networks, no response from 26%
- The subscription link to the listserv was shared with COVID-END partners on July 6, 2020

Outcome (cont'd)

- Listserv subscription totaled 181 subscriptions by the end of July 2020, i.e., a 93.4% increase in listserv subscription in the second month of the listserv operation.
- 39 of the 169 subscriptions in July 2020 were linked directly with organizational emails
- We like to believe that a majority of the remaining 130 subscriptions are directly linked to the key contacts within the evidence groups contacted, given the timing of subscriptions

Distinct Activities carried out by the Engaging Working Group

- Membership survey
 - Needs Assessment
 - Top 5 Questions Survey
- Topics of discussions on the listserv
- Summary of webinars
- Summary of listserv membership
- Lessons Learned Survey

Membership Survey (MS)

- Carried out in fall 2020
- All registered members were sent the link to the survey (n = 277)
- 91 out of 277 members responded to the MS – approx. 33% response

MS (Cont'd): Findings

■ RESPONDENT PROFILE

Membership Survey

- Most respondents were from the Govt. & Academic/Research Institutions – 82%
- Most respondents were also from WHO PAHO region – 51%
- Respondents located in Canada accounted for 29% of the overall response

MS (Cont'd): Experience in EIPM

- Experience Level
 - 60% - 65% of respondents in both surveys indicated they were either experienced or very experienced within Evidence Informed Policy Making (EIPM)
 - 20% - 32% indicated some experience in EIPM across both surveys
 - Others were inexperienced or had no experience in Evidence Informed Policy Making (EIPM)

MS: Involvement in EIPM

- Majority of respondents in the WHO PAHO region were involved in Recommending and Packaging
- Majority of respondents in the WHO AFRO region were involved in recommending and engaging
- There were limited responses from the WHO regions of SEARO, EMRO & WPRO
- Half of all survey respondents found COVID-END through a professional colleague or contact.

MS: Areas of Interest

- Survey respondents were asked to identify areas of information they would be interested in from the following:-
 - Public Health Measures
 - Clinical Management
 - Economic and social responses
 - Health systems arrangement
 - Evidence Synthesis
 - Horizon scanning
 - Priority setting
 - Communication
 - Equity

Areas of Interest (Cont'd)

- Top 3 choices were:
 - Public Health Measures (47)
 - Evidence Synthesis (42)
 - Health Systems Arrangement (37)

- Other choices were:
 - Horizon Scanning (34)
 - Clinical Management (33)
 - Priority Setting (28)
 - Equity (22)
 - Communication (20)

MS: Areas of Interest (cont'd)

- Majority of survey respondents from the WHO PAHO region indicated interests in **Evidence synthesis and Public Health Measures**
- Participants from the WHO AFRO region indicated interests in **Evidence Synthesis and Economic and Social Responses**
- Participants from the WHO EURO region indicated interests in **Horizon Scanning**
- We saw limited responses from WHO EMRO, SEARO and WPRO regions

Top 5 Questions Survey

- The feedback from the membership survey on the subject of areas of interest participants sought more information prompted the “Top 5 questions survey”
- The survey sought to the top 5 questions respondents had for a 12-month period leading into a 24-month period regarding COVID-19
- A link to the top 5 questions survey was sent out to all registered members 2 weeks after the MS link was shared

Top 5 Questions Survey (Cont'd)

- 285 members were sent the Top 5 questions survey (new additions to the listserv membership accounts for the difference)
- Participation rate for the Top 5 questions survey was 30% i.e. 86 out of 285 participated
- Of the 86 participants, only 30 participants responded – 35%
- 4 areas of interests & 28 sub-themes emerged from the survey

Areas of Interest & Sub-themes

■ Public Health Measures

- Balance of Public Health with Economic and Social
- Communication and Behaviour Strategy
- Testing and Tracing
- Adoption and Adherence
- Future Preparedness
- Social Determinants of Health
- Prevention and Wellness
- Collaboration and Research

Areas of Interest & Sub-themes

- Clinical Management
 - Transmission
 - Treatment
 - Comorbidity
 - Mental Health
 - Medium to Long Term Effects
 - Concurrent Management of COVID and other seasonal infections

Areas of Interest & Sub-themes

Health System Arrangement

- Vaccination
- Equity
- Pre-existing System Challenges
- Healthcare Workers
- Private Sector Involvement
- LMIC Specific
- Virtual Care
- Supplies and Equipment
- Restoration of non-COVID services
- Infection Prevention and Control

Areas of Interest & Sub-themes

- Economic and Social Response
 - Employment and Labor Market
 - Childcare and Schools
 - Vulnerable Populations
 - Democracy and Governance

Some Key Questions Put Forward

■ Public Health Measures

- The Effectiveness of Public Health Interventions (Prevention and Transmission)
- The “New Normal” and its implications for individuals and the collective
- The “New Normal” and its social and economic impacts on education & employment
- Managing information and misinformation through the media
- Behavioural change communication

Some Key Questions Put Forward

- Clinical Management
 - Effectiveness of interventions for prevention of transmission
 - Child vs adult transmission
 - Understanding transmission in vulnerable populations
 - Reinfection
 - Therapeutic efficacy of treatments available (pre & post exposure)
 - Cost effectiveness and affordability of the therapeutics
 - Complimentary and alternative therapy
 - Drug approval processes

Some Key Questions Put Forward

- Health Systems Arrangement
 - Vaccination: Approval process, distribution and prioritization, barriers & facilitation to uptake
 - Health system access, effectiveness, finances, human resources for health related to COVID-19
 - Training: skills acquisition, training & use of non-physician and community health care workers
 - Public-private partnerships
 - Supporting healthcare systems in LMICs
 - Effectiveness of testing and treatment in LMIC's

Some Key Questions Put Forward

- Economic & Social Response
 - Social & economic impacts of COVID-19 and its implications for the “New Normal”
 - Safe return to work
 - Effectiveness of long term closure of schools on COVID-19
 - Effectiveness of virtual classrooms vs in-person classrooms
 - Equity and access for vulnerable populations
 - Effectiveness of interventions and care for vulnerable groups

Top 5 Questions: Recommendations

■ Membership Management

- Map linkages between sectors, ensuring connections between evidence producers and users
- Efforts should be made to focus on global representation within COVID-END adopting a regional approach, given that there are potential differences in priority areas of interests.

Top 5 Questions: Recommendations

■ Areas of Interest

- Majority of COVID-END members want evidence for what works i.e., effectiveness and presentation of what works
- Public Health Measures also focuses on effectiveness, but importantly improving the understanding of communication and behavioural strategies
- Clinically, there is interest in the long-term impacts of COVID-19, co-morbidity & mental health

Top 5 Questions: Recommendations

- Areas of Interest (Cont'd)
 - Health systems arrangements focused on the capacity & resilience of the health system to respond to a respiratory outbreak, as well as the potential of a new vaccine
 - Economic & social responses focused on equity, vulnerable populations, schools and the workplace

Topics of discussion on the Listserv

- Following the launch of the COVID-END listserv, the working group sought to increase participation, engagement and knowledge sharing in the context of COVID-19 through active discussions within the COVID-END community
- COVID-19 related subject themes were identified and potential topics of discussions were raised for discussions on a weekly basis
- Subject experts were also identified to facilitate and moderate the discussion sessions

Topics of discussion on the Listserv

- Discussions started out on a weekly basis with facilitators putting out an initial post, followed by a follow-up post to responses generated during the week
- Overtime, the working group transitioned to 2 – 3 new topics per month
- From June 2021 onwards, the working group moved to 2 new topics per month

Discussions Conducted on the Listserv Based on Thematic Subjects

No.	Subject Area	No. of discussion topics posted	No. of people engaging with the posts
1.	Citizen engagement	2	12
2.	Evidence synthesis	11	22
3.	Practice guidelines	1	1
4.	Knowledge Translation/Dissemination	2	2
5.	Living evidence and guidelines	3	15
6.	Critical appraisal tools	2	8
7.	Technological tools for rapid evidence synthesis	1	1
8.	Appraisal of evidence	2	4
9.	Duplication of reviews	1	10
10.	Impact of service	1	3
11.	Registration of systematic reviews	3	13

Summary of webinars

- In May 2020, the Engaging Working Group identified various topics and subject experts and started organizing monthly webinars.
- The webinars were supported by the COVID-END Secretariat and the McMaster Health Forum
- Webinars were averagely 1 hour in length, recorded, and the links posted on the COVID-END website
- A total of 14 webinars were hosted by the Engaging working group between June 2020 & November 2021.

Summary of webinars (cont'd)



COVID-END
 COVID-19 Evidence Network
 to support Decision-making


COVID-END: Achievements, Priorities and Opportunities to Draw on this Work to Achieve Greater Value for Money When Commissioning or Funding COVID-19 Research

EVIR (Ensuring Value in Research) Webinar, 30 July 2020

John N. Lavis, MD PhD, Co-Lead, COVID-END;
 Director, McMaster Health Forum; and Professor, McMaster University

Jeremy Grimshaw, MBChB PHD, Co-Lead, COVID-END;
 Senior Scientist, OHRI; and Professor, University Of Ottawa

David Tovey, MBChB FRCGP, Senior Advisor, COVID-END

LMIC's and Utilizing Evidence to Inform Decision Making in Response to COVID-19

July 2, 2020



EVIR

ENSURING VALUE IN RESEARCH

Centre for Methods and Tools



COVID-19 Evidence Network to support Decision Making (COVID-END): Resources to Support the COVID-19 Response



COVID-19 WEBINAR



Webinar topics covered

No.	Webinar Topics	Date
1.	Top Ten insights into how COVID-END can help you prepare evidence syntheses in response to the COVID-19 pandemic	June 16, 2020
2.	CanCOVID Speaker Series: COVID-END evidence synthesis	Sept. 15, 2020
3.	The Living hub of COVID-19 knowledge hubs: A promising collaborative platform to organize knowledge and reduce duplication	Oct. 14, 2020
4.	Scanning the horizon for COVID-19-related priorities: Insights from COVID-END's global horizon scanning panel	Nov. 4, 2020
5.	An introduction to COVID-END resources	Dec. 2, 2020

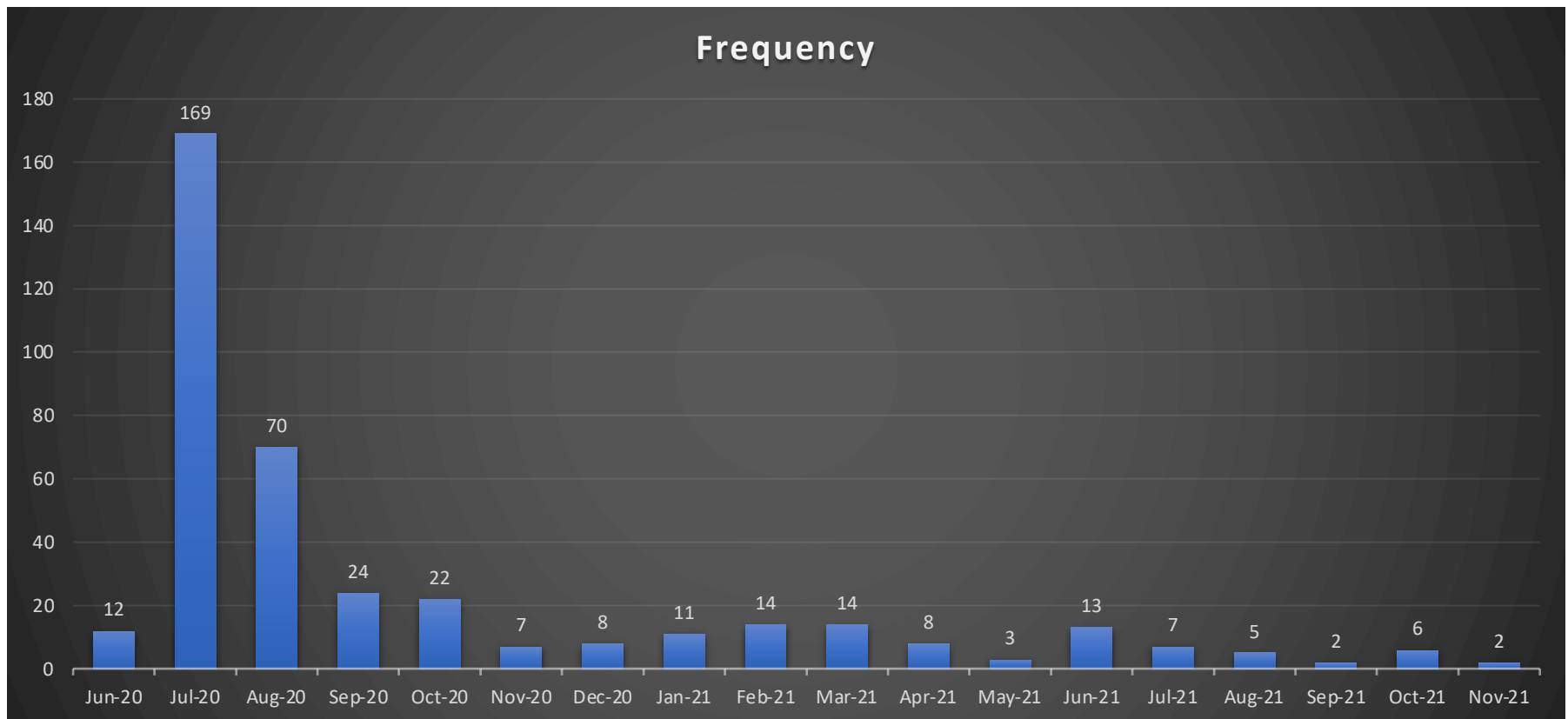
Webinar topics covered

No.	Webinar Topics	Dates
6.	Evidence synthesis communities in low-income and middle-income countries and the COVID-19 response	Jan. 27, 2021
7.	Using specific COVID-19 targets and patient care settings as a springboard for driving global improvements in the evidence/guidance ecosystem cycle for COVID-19 and beyond	Feb. 24, 2021
8.	The COVID-END inventory: an in-depth analysis of evidence syntheses addressing decisions related to the COVID-19 pandemic response	Mar. 24, 2021
9.	Tackling COVID-19 misinformation shared via WhatsApp	April 23, 2021
10.	Supporting the global evidence response to COVID – the first year of COVID-END	June 2, 2021

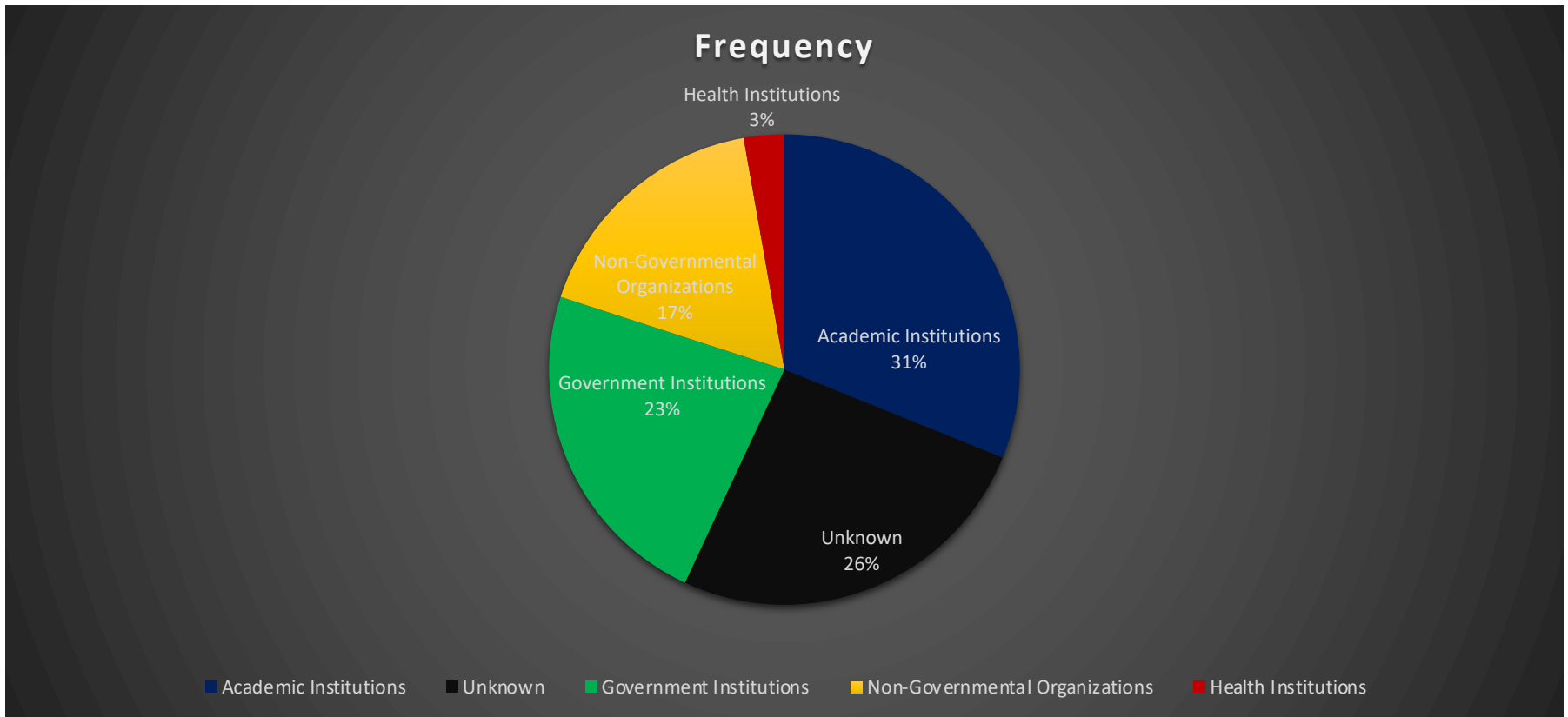
Webinar topics covered

No.	Webinar Topics	Dates
11.	Living rapid reviews: methods for dealing with study results with limited relevance to current context?	July 7, 2021
12.	United Nations Research Roadmap for the COVID-19 Recovery: Leveraging the Power of Science for a More Equitable, Resilient and Sustainable Future	Sept. 29, 2021
13.	Drawing together the threads: operationalizing the output from the Horizon-scanning pane	Nov. 3, 2021
14.	Engaging Patients/Citizens in Evidence Synthesis	Nov. 24, 2021

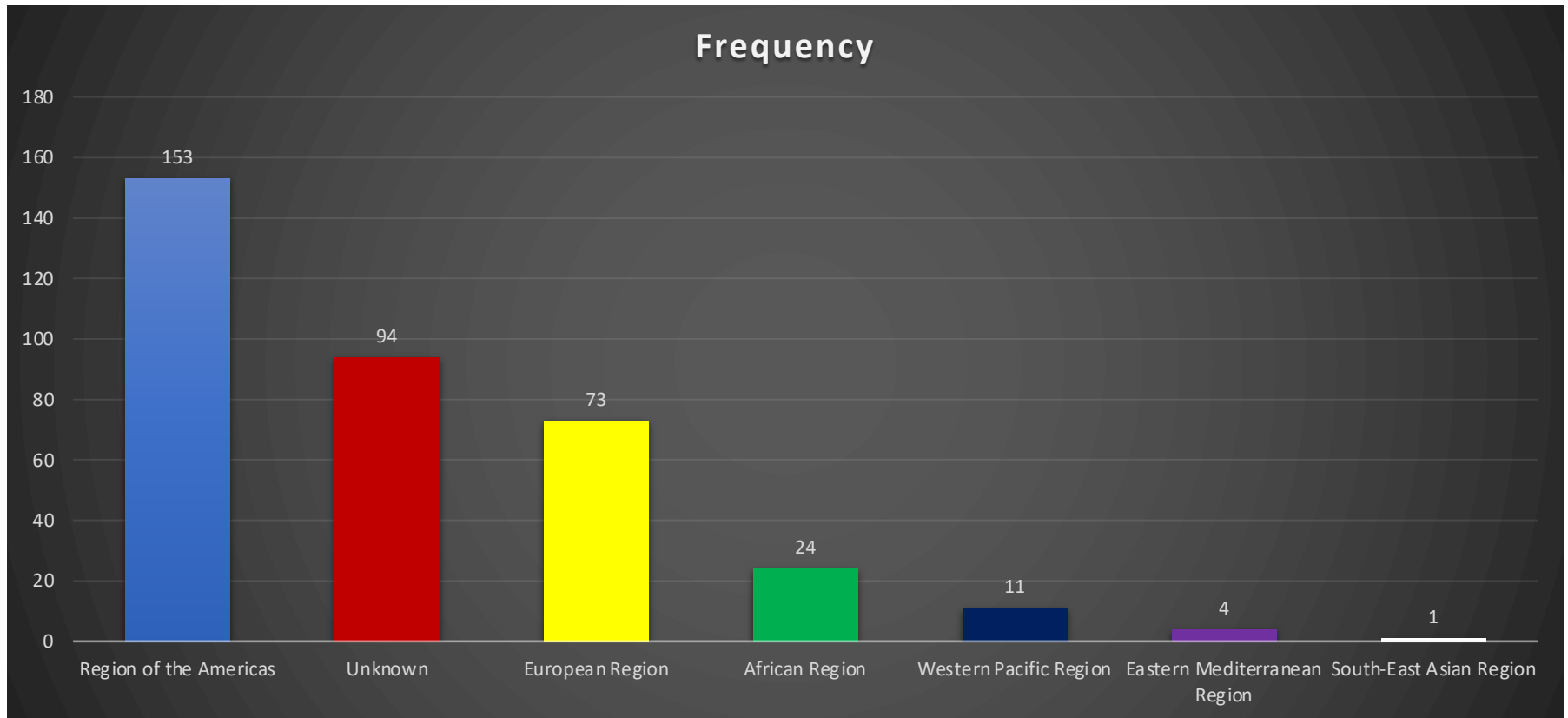
Summary of listserv membership (June 2020 – Nov. 2021)



Subscription by organizations



Subscription by WHO regions



Lessons Learned Survey

- To be administered to listserv members in Dec 2021
- To collect data on lessons learned by those supporting decision makers during COVID-19
- Plan to publish the results in 2022
- Being led by Dr Jenny Yost and a graduate student of Jenny's, support from Maureen Dobbins and the Engaging WG

