

Dimensions of difference in evidence reviews¹

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Background

Systematic reviews use formal explicit methods to describe and synthesize evidence. They vary considerably in their aims and their methods. This poster and five sub-posters describe some of the main dimensions of difference.

I. Questions, evidence and methods

USERS DRIVING THE REVIEW

Who is the review for? Who is asking the questions & informing the conduct of the review?

EVIDENCE TYPES

What types of evidence are being considered?

TYPES OF QUESTION

What do we want to know? What is the question being asked that the review aims to answer?

SYSTEMATIC OR NON SYSTEMATIC

Is the review systematic in using explicit rigorous methods?

II. Breadth and depth

BREADTH AND DEPTH OF EACH STAGE OF A REVIEW?

How broad or narrow is the review question?

How broadly is it being addressed in this review?

What time and other resources are available for the review?

BREADTH AND DEPTH EXAMPLES

BROAD AND NARROW EVIDENCE TYPES

III. Methodological approaches

APPROACH TO REVIEWING

Is the synthesis a priori or iterative in method and aiming to aggregate 'facts' or create a new ways of understanding? Are the data and analysis numbers or words, empirical or conceptual?

EXAMPLES OF APPROACHES TO REVIEWING TO REVIEWING

Statistical meta analysis
Meta ethnography

IV. Quality and relevance appraisal

DIMENSIONS OF QUALITY AND RELEVANCE OF THE EVIDENCE

There are many tools for assessing the quality of different types of research. There are also review specific issues of appropriateness of the method and focus of the research to the review question.

REVIEW STAGES AND QUALITY AND RELEVANCE APPRAISAL

QUALITY ASSURANCE OF CONDUCT OF THE REVIEW?

V. Communication, interpretation and application

COMMUNICATION OF THE REVIEW FINDINGS

INTERPRETATION OF THE REVIEW FINDINGS

APPLICATION OF INTERPRETED FINDINGS

REFERENCES

(See attached posters for detailed references)

¹. Gough D (2007) Typology of evidence reviews (I. Questions, evidence and methods; II..Breadth and depth; III. Methodological approaches; IV. Quality and relevance appraisal; V. Communication, Interpretation and application. Series of six posters presented at National Centre for Research Methods meeting, Manchester, January 2007. London: EPPI-Centre.