Worksheet for Using a Systematic Review About Therapy

University of Alberta EBM Toolkit

CITATION:

ARE THE RESULTS OF THE STUDY VALID?*
* Note that these validity criteria can be applied to systematic reviews in any domain (Therapy, Diagnosis, Harm, Prognosis)

1. Did the overview address a focused clinical question?
   
   [ ] Yes  [ ] No  [ ] Can't Tell
   
   • Patients? Exposures? Outcomes?

   • Therapy? Causation? Diagnosis? Prognosis?

2. Were the criteria used to select articles for inclusion appropriate?
   
   [ ] Yes  [ ] No  [ ] Can't Tell
   

3. Is it unlikely that important, relevant studies were missed?
   
   [ ] Yes  [ ] No  [ ] Can't Tell
   
   • Bibliographic databases?

   • Reference lists?

   • Personal contacts?
4. Was the validity of the included studies appraised?

[ ] Yes            [ ] No            [ ] Can't Tell

- Validity criteria?

5. Were assessments of studies reproducible?

[ ] Yes            [ ] No            [ ] Can't Tell

- Blinded reviewers?

- Inter-observer agreement?

6. Were the results similar from study to study?

- Tests of homogeneity?

WHAT WERE THE RESULTS?*
*Note that these questions apply ONLY to systematic reviews of therapy

1. What are the overall results of the review?

- Overall ORs, RRs?

- Weighing of studies?

2. How precise were the results?

- Confidence intervals?
WILL THE RESULTS HELP ME IN CARING FOR MY PATIENTS?*
*Note that these questions apply ONLY to systematic reviews of therapy

1. Can the results be applied to my patient care?

   [ ] Yes      [ ] No      [ ] Can't Tell
   
   • Patients similar for demographics, severity, co-morbidity and other prognostic factors?

   • Compelling reason why the results should not be applied?

2. Were all clinically important outcomes considered?

   [ ] Yes      [ ] No      [ ] Can't Tell

   • Are substitute endpoints valid?

3. Are the likely treatment benefits worth the potential harms and costs?

   [ ] Yes      [ ] No      [ ] Can't Tell

   • NNT for different outcomes?