

Critical Appraisal Worksheet for Systematic Reviews

Appraiser: _____

Date: ___/___/___

Citation: _____

What is the clinical question that this study addresses? Put the question in PICO format.

Population: _____

Intervention: _____

Comparison (if applicable): _____

Outcome: _____

I. ARE THE RESULTS OF THIS SYSTEMATIC REVIEW VALID?

Did the systematic review address a focused, sensible clinical question? <i>Is it biologically plausible to combine together the type of patients included across studies, the type of treatments used across studies, the outcomes assessed across studies?</i>	
Was the search for relevant articles detailed and exhaustive? <i>Was the literature search appropriate? Did authors search bibliographies, talk to experts in the field to identify unpublished studies, search non-English language journals?</i>	
Were the primary studies of high methodologic quality? <i>Did authors restrict the systematic review to RCT's for questions about therapy? Did authors appraise the validity of included studies?</i>	
Was the search for studies and assessment of studies reproducible? <i>Was the search for studies and the quality assessments of studies carried out by more than one person? Were reviewers in agreement?</i>	

II. WHAT ARE THE RESULTS?

Were the results similar from study to study? <i>How similar are the point estimates from study to study?</i> <i>Do the confidence intervals overlap from study to study?</i> <i>Are differences between studies greater than would be expected by chance?</i> <i>Was a formal test for heterogeneity done?</i> <i>Do authors explain between study variability in findings?</i>	
What are the overall results of the review? How precise are they?	

III. HOW CAN I APPLY THE RESULTS TO PATIENT CARE?

How similar are my patients to the patients in the review?	
Are any postulated subgroup effects credible? <i>Was there a large difference in treatment effect across subgroups?</i> <i>Was there a highly statistically significant difference in effect between subgroups?</i> <i>Was the subgroup hypothesis stated at the beginning of the review (rather than the product of data dredging?)</i> <i>Is there indirect evidence to support a sub-group conclusion (biologic plausibility)?</i>	
Is the intervention feasible in my practice setting?	
Were all clinically important outcomes considered?	
Are the benefits worth the costs and potential risks?	

CLINICAL BOTTOM LINE

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.