

Overview of the review process

Overarching steps	Specific steps
Defining the structure and questions	• Meet with team to discuss conceptual issues and focus • Query experts
Planning and preparing for work	• To prepare for searches: ○ Identify and share articles that appear to address questions; check indexing in Medline ○ Discuss databases for search ○ Devise search strategy ○ Estimate yield and relevance in trial search • For abstraction: ○ Develop and/or modify sample tables to define population, exposure/intervention, comparator, outcomes, risk of bias elements. • For risk of bias assessment and strength of evidence grading: ○ Circulate standard risk of bias and strength of evidence assessments

Searches	• Perform dual searches in Medline and other relevant databases • Use MESH headings • Limit searches by study design and key words, if needed • Handsearch reference lists of included articles
Pull and share articles with team	• Pull and share articles with team • If necessary, obtain articles from interlibrary loan
Dual review for inclusion/exclusion	• Dual review titles, abstracts, and full text articles for inclusion/exclusion • Have full team review articles when there are questions • Document reasons for exclusion
Data Abstraction	• Have two reviewers abstract articles into relevant tables and/or spreadsheets
Risk of bias assessment	• Have two reviewers quality grade articles with arbitration of differences
Strength of evidence grading	• Grade strength of evidence for individual articles and body of evidence
Analysis	• Meet as group to discuss findings in articles with low to moderate risk of bias • Determine ability to/perform meta-analysis • Reduce heterogeneity through subgroups if indicated
Write up findings and publish work	• Offer all who contribute potential authorship • Write abstract, background, methods, results, discussion • Acknowledge contributors • Pick journal and format paper • Submit paper for publication

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