ABSTRACT

Conducting a systematic literature review is a great way to learn more about a specific topic, and it can be publishable. It is not considered science on its own, but it is considered the precursor of the science to come.

WHAT IS A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW?

“A research literature review is a systematic, explicit, and reproducible method for identifying, evaluating, and synthesizing the existing body of completed and recorded work produced by researchers, scholars, and practitioners” [1], p. 2. It is performed to understand what is currently known about a topic. It is the first step of research and can lead to a grant, a study, or thesis/dissertation. High quality reviews are comprehensive, and reproducible.

BE SYSTEMATIC IN APPROACH

It should not be done in one sitting. It should take 1-2 months of steady, systematic work. Work in stages. There are at least seven stages in a quality review: Select a topic, conduct initial research, develop your objective, conduct your search with inclusion and exclusion criteria, summarize the observations from the articles reviewed, provide some synthesis of the data that can lead to inferences about frequency, barriers to adoption, or general themes.

TOPIC & INITIAL RESEARCH

- Choose your topic; e.g. Electronic health record adoption
- Conduct some initial research for more information about it
- Create a basic literature matrix to collect a record of research
- Narrow your topic down to something specific to examine
- The last paragraph of the introduction should list an objective
- e.g. Facilitators and barriers to adoption of the EHR in the U.S.

RESULTS

- The results section should report and summarize your findings. Combine the notes from each reviewer into a spreadsheet and format that into a table for your review.
- Can you identify any common themes between the articles? Hopefully you can, because that is what will make your work publishable. You want to be able to say something about these works that tie them together, differentiate them from another, or that could lead to a study.

LITERATURE MATRIX

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of pub</th>
<th>Authors</th>
<th>Study</th>
<th>Journal</th>
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METHODS AND FIGURE 1

- Your Methods section is a recipe that you are creating in a way that makes your literature review reproducible. Describe your key terms, which should come from MeSH. Provide a copy of your search string. Use Boolean operators. Define your inclusion and exclusion criteria. Create a figure to illustrate your method of selection.

- Once you have your set of articles to review, clearly identify what you (and your team) will be looking for. Discuss how you all agreed on this.

- Divide the articles into groups that show overlap; you want to be able to report that at least one reviewer read every article. Keep detailed notes from each reviewer. This will enable you to calculate a kappa statistic that shows agreement between reviewers.

- Common research databases

- Targeted journal search

PRISMA, 2009

Use the PRISMA (2009) standard to frame out your review [2].