

Chapter 3.6 Assessing the problems and developing a scoping review

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Further reading

1. Gough D, Oliver S, Thomas J. Learning from Research: Systematic Reviews for Informing Policy Decisions: A Quick Guide. London: Nesta. 2013.

Summary of this document: Systematic reviews provide a vital tool for policy makers and practitioners to find what works, how it works – and what might do harm. This guide is a short introduction for decision-makers and researchers considering whether a systematic review may be appropriate to fill a gap in knowledge or to use as a resource.

In this guide, the authors provide guidance on selecting an appropriate methodology for authors to use when preparing a systematic review and highlights some of the key issues to consider when commissioning or using a review. It presents systematic reviews as useful tools for identifying and synthesizing high-quality existing research. The guide is aimed at anybody from central government, local authorities, public service providers, regulatory and advisory bodies, charities, researchers, or the consultancy sector.

2. Gough D, Oliver S, Thomas J. An Introduction to Systematic Reviews. London: Sage Publications Ltd. 2017.

Summary of this document: Systematic reviews and other forms of evidence synthesis may offer a pathway to turn high-quality evidence into sound policy and effective interventions. This reading provides a step-by-step advice on the logic and processes of systematic reviewing.

In this textbook, the authors introduce systematic review research methodology to students and researchers. It emphasizes the multidisciplinary nature of systematic reviews and its applicability to different research fields. The textbook includes a chapter on information and data management, content on statistical methods, examples from across the social sciences, a guide to working with many different types of data including longitudinal and panel, and information on reporting and interpreting findings.

3. Grant MJ, Booth A. A typology of reviews: An analysis of 14 review types and associated methodologies. Health Information and Libraries Journal. 2009; 26(2): 91-108.

Summary of this document: This reading provides a descriptive insight into the most common examples of review with examples from health and health information domains.

In this short article, the authors classify and analyze common types of reviews used in evidence-based practices. The authors identified 14 review types and describe the perceived strengths and weaknesses of each. They also compare the search, appraisal, synthesis, and analysis (SALSA) methods used in each and cite existing studies as examples. The authors conclude that many review types lack standardized methodologies and that there is a significant overlap between review types.

4. Khalil H, Peters M, Godfrey CM, McInerney P, Soares CB, Parker D. An Evidence-Based Approach to Scoping Reviews. *Worldviews on Evidence Based Nursing*. 2016; 13(2): 118-23.

Summary of this document: Decisions about new Health EDRM research should be based on an understanding of the evidence that is already available. Scoping reviews can help decision-makers and researchers to examine the extent, range and nature of research activity. This reading reports on several methodological steps that can enhance the utility of scoping reviews.

In this short article, the authors describe a new scoping review methodology that integrates several existing methodologies. It recommends a five-step approach including (1) identifying the research question, (2) identifying relevant studies, (3) study selection, (4) data presentation, and (5) result collation. It also provides specific guidance on how to execute each step and provide recommendations on presenting results in a manuscript (e.g., using PRISMA diagrams). The authors conclude that the use of standardized methodologies, like the one described in this article, can add an additional level of rigor to new review techniques.

5. Pham MT, Rajić A, Greig JD, Sargeant JM, Papadopoulos A, McEwen SA. A scoping review of scoping reviews: Advancing the approach and enhancing the consistency. *Research Synthesis Methods*. 2014; 5(4): 371-85.

Summary of this document: Decisions about new Health EDRM research should be based on an understanding of the evidence that is already available. Scoping reviews can help decision-makers and researchers to examine the extent, range and nature of research activity. This reading provides an overview of scoping reviews in the literature.

In this evaluative scoping review, the authors searched for scoping reviews published between 1999 and October 2012. They identified 344 studies, the majority of which addressed health and/or social science topics. The authors found that there was significant variation in completion times, and not all studies utilized a published method. They also found that many studies did not include a quality assessment, as this is not a commonly included step in existing scoping review methodologies. The authors proposed some recommendations for advancing the scoping review approach and enhancing the consistency with which they are undertaken and reported.