Planning for a Systematic Review

Process should be documented prior to starting review

Develop a focused question
- Patient/Population/Problem
- Intervention/Exposure
- Comparison: control, other intervention, gold standard for diagnosis
- Outcome

Develop inclusion/exclusion criteria
- Study methodology
- Randomization
- Follow-up
- Population
- Language
- Setting
- Published/unpublished studies
- Keep record of included & excluded studies, rationale
- Selection decisions by multiple reviewers
- Plan how to resolve differences

Plan a literature search strategy
- Where are you going to search
  - Major databases
  - Subject/region specific databases
  - Grey literature sources
- How are you going to search?
  - PICO concepts
  - Synonyms for each concept
  - Keywords v. subject headings and limits
  - Consult a librarian

Plan how to assess & report quality of studies and how to extract data from the studies
- Some assessment tools: CONSORT, GRADE, PRISMA

Record keeping and data management
- Maintaining records of search strategies and search results
- Managing references and articles
- Documenting the screening process—exclusion and inclusion
- Documenting quality assessment of included articles
Recommended Resources

Planning


Methods


Bias


Classics


