Information sheet

Literature searches as a basis for evidence-based research

Evidence-based research is build on the systematic and transparent use of previous research, so that new research projects can address relevant questions and answer them validly and efficiently. This is underpinned by a comprehensive search of the available literature and the synthesis of the evidence thus identified [1,2].

*To demonstrate the current state of knowledge and the necessity of the planned research, it is recommended to carry out a **structured, traceable and reproducible literature review**. This enables the researcher's own project and the expected findings to be contextualised and discussed within the scientific community. This approach is essential for the preparation of funding applications, study protocols and also (following appropriate updating) the final publication of the results [1]. REVEAL provides a practical guide to identifying existing evidence ('prior evidence') during study planning [3].*

Aim of a project-specific literature search

It is helpful to determine early druing project planning which type of literature search is most appropriate for your research:

a) Exploring the **scientific context («Research in Context»)** or rapidly synthesising the literature on a topic of interest **(«Rapid Review»).**

With **REVEAL** [3], a specific evidence-based approach is available for identifying existing evidence when planning clinical trials. The **REVEAL team** provides free instructions, templates, and examples.

At the DKF, we are also happy to advise you on this topic: DKF contact form

b) **Systematic Review:** Aiming to summarise all available evidence as comprehensively as possible. Depending on the breadth of the research question, two common review types can be distinguished:

- **Scoping Review** (to develop an "evidence map")
- **Systematic Review**, with or without meta-analysis (to answer a specific research question)

In cooperation with the University Medical Library, we offer methodological and statistical support in the planning and conduct of literature reviews and meta-analyses.

For free-of-charge consulting and further questions please contact us: DKF contact form

References

[1] Evidence-Based Research Series-Paper 2 : Using an Evidence-Based Research approach before a new study is conducted to ensure value. Lund H, Juhl CB, Nørgaard B, Draborg E, Henriksen M, Andreasen J, Christensen R, Nasser M, Ciliska D, Clarke M, Tugwell P, Martin J, Blaine C, Brunnhuber K, Robinson KA; Evidence-Based Research Network. J Clin Epidemiol. 2021 Jan;129:158-166. doi: 10.1016/j.jclinepi.2020.07.019. Epub 2020 Sep 26. PMID: 32987159.

[2] Evidence-Based Research Series-Paper 1: What Evidence-Based Research is and why is it important? Robinson KA, Brunnhuber K, Ciliska D, Juhl CB, Christensen R, Lund H; Evidence-Based Research Network. J Clin Epidemiol. 2021 Jan;129:151-157. doi: 10.1016/j.jclinepi.2020.07.020. Epub 2020 Sep 23. PMID: 32979491.

[3] Identifying prior evidence for new trials (REVEAL): guidance for clinical researchers. Griebler U, Ledinger D, Klerings I, Schandelmaier S, Dobrescu A, Deschodt M, McLennan S, Hemkens LG, Nussbaumer-Streit B, Briel M. BMJ. 2026 Feb 20;392:e083718. doi: 10.1136/bmj-2024-083718. PMID: 41720495.