

Get started: Consider These Things

Librarians are always available for consultations and can arrange to provide instruction sessions for a class or lab group on relevant Library resources, services, and research skills. Don't hesitate to contact us.

If you are specifically focused on conducting a systematic review, we ask that you thoughtfully consider all aspects of the process before deciding to begin one. Systematic reviews require a substantial amount of work for all concerned. In order to make the best use of everyone's time, review and discuss the questions below with your team before requesting a meeting with us. Thank you!

Topic

- What question do you want to answer?
- Why is your question important? What will it add to the literature?
- What are the main concepts (usually 2-4) in your question?
- What synonyms could be used for each concept?
- Is this question already addressed by a proposed or published systematic review?
A look in PubMed (limited to SRs) and PROSPERO (<https://www.crd.york.ac.uk/PROSPERO/>) will help you answer this question.
*note: To find systematic reviews in PubMed add **AND systematic[sb]** after your search words*
- Does a quick 'scoping search' of PubMed or Google Scholar provide enough results to indicate that a systematic review will be feasible and productive? (generally more than 5 articles and / or more than 400 subjects studied). Include 5 - 8 articles that would be used in your review.
- Have you developed a systematic review protocol?
 - [Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis Protocols \(PRISMA-P\) 2015 statement](#)
 - [PRISMA-P Protocol Checklist: recommended items to include in a systematic review protocol](#)
- Have you registered your systematic review protocol with [PROSPERO](#)?
Don't register too early, but when your systematic review protocol is complete, submit your registration request to PROSPERO so that it is available to the research community. Registration in PROSPERO involves the prospective submission and publication of key information about the design and conduct of a systematic review. Registration on PROSPERO is free of charge. In return, registrants are accountable for the accuracy and updating of information submitted. PROSPERO aims to provide a comprehensive listing of systematic reviews registered at inception to help avoid duplication and reduce opportunity for reporting bias by enabling comparison of the completed review with what was planned in the protocol.

Team

- Who fills these roles on your team?
 - Lead/PI/first reviewer
 - Co-PI/second reviewer

- Statistical expertise
- Content expert
- Project manager/organizer/gadfly

Timeline

- How much time do you and your team have to allocate to the project? What is your project timetable?
 - Cochrane advises authors to plan on ~12 months from conception to submission. From our experience the time-frame is no shorter than 6 months and may extend 24 months or more. [A 2017 meta-analysis found the mean estimated time to complete the project and publish the review was 67.3 weeks.](#)
- What are your plans once your systematic review is completed?

You may choose more than one answer.

 - Submit for publication? Which journals are you considering?
 - Present as a paper or poster? Which conferences are you considering?
 - Submit as a thesis or dissertation? Which program?

Additionally,

- Which reference management software will you use?

****We can discuss choices with you.****

 - Endnote
 - Mendeley
 - Zotero
 - Other (which?)
- What software will you use for title and abstract screening, full text screening, and data abstraction?

*You may indicate more than one. ***We can discuss choices with you.****

 - Excel
 - Covidence
 - DistillerSR
 - Eppi 4
 - Rayyan
 - RevMan 5 (from Cochrane Collaboration)
 - Sumari (from Joanna Briggs Institute)
 - A database program (e.g., Access or ??)
 - I have no idea
- Are you aware of existing standards for the design, conduct and reporting of systematic reviews? (see self-guidance section, below - or schedule a consultation with a librarian)