

Finding the Evidence

A brief introductory guide for researchers, healthcare professionals and commissioners who want to know how to find evidence to support decisions

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Finding the Evidence

What is evidence and why do I need to find it?

In health and social care when we talk about 'evidence' we are referring to high quality clinical and non-clinical information. To improve efficiency and effectiveness in clinical decision-making (and ultimately patient care and outcomes) we need to consider what evidence exists and use it to inform our practice. Perhaps you have to make decisions about treatments or the use of resources, or you want to find out more about an unusual clinical condition. In all of these cases searching for evidence can help you.

Where can I find the evidence?

NHS Evidence Search <http://www.evidence.nhs.uk/>

NHS Evidence is freely available to all. It allows everyone working in health and social care to access a wide range of health information. NHS Evidence helps users to search simultaneously across more than 180 high quality websites. It ranks search results according to relevance and quality and allows users, through **My Evidence**, to personalise a search, and register to receive the latest health information.

NHS Athens account

All NHS staff can register for an NHS Athens account to get free access to the journals and databases acquired by NHS Evidence. Register for an Athens account at <https://register.athensams.net/nhs/nhseng/>

NHS Evidence includes all the following sources:

National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) <http://www.nihr.ac.uk/>

Includes The Portfolio Database - a repository of information on all portfolio research projects in England. <http://public.ukcrn.org.uk/search/>

The Centre for Reviews and Dissemination (CRD)

<http://www.york.ac.uk/inst/crd/index.htm>

This is a Department of the University of York and part of the NIHR. It undertakes systematic reviews evaluating the research evidence on health and public health questions of national and international importance. The following databases are used extensively by health professionals, policy makers and researchers around the world:

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- **DARE** contains 15,000 abstracts of systematic reviews including over 6,000 quality assessed reviews.
- **NHS EED** contains 24,000 abstracts of health economics papers including over 7,000 quality assessed economic evaluations.
- **DARE** and **NHS EED** include details of abstracts in the process of being written and these can be 'fast-tracked' on request.
- **HTA** brings together details of over 8,000 completed and ongoing health technology assessments from around the world.

The Cochrane Collaboration

Produce Cochrane Reviews - systematic reviews of primary research in human health care and health policy. They investigate the effects of interventions for prevention, treatment and rehabilitation. They also assess the accuracy of diagnostic tests for given conditions in specific patient groups and settings. These can be accessed through the Cochrane Library <http://www.thecochranelibrary.com>

NICE <http://www.nice.org.uk/>

The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) provides guidance, sets quality standards and manages a national database to improve people's health and prevent and treat ill health.

Databases for health and social care (accessed through NHS Evidence)

CINAHL	Nursing and allied health disciplines
BNI	Nursing, midwifery, health visitors
PsycINFO	Psychology and allied fields
Health Business Elite	Health care administration and non-clinical aspects of health care institution management
HMIC	Health service management and administration
AMED	Allied health professions, complementary medicine
EMBASE	General medical with European focus
MEDLINE	General medical

Knowledge summaries

NHS Clinical Knowledge Summaries are a reliable source of evidence-based information and practical 'know how' about the common conditions managed in primary care. <http://www.cks.nhs.uk/home>

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Searching the evidence – other sources

PEDro	Physiotherapy http://www.pedro.org.au/
ASSIA	Social sciences and health information http://www.csa.com/factsheets/assia-set-c.php
TRIP	Clinical search engine www.tripdatabase.com

Search strategies

When developing a search strategy thinking about PICO (Patient, Intervention, Comparison, Outcomes) can help focus your question. When searching consider using: key concepts, synonyms, alternative words, truncation, search strings, combining terms, and limiting results.

UHL Library Services have created an e-learning tool '**Principles of literature searching**' which provides more information and an introduction to database searching.

<http://www.uhl-library.nhs.uk/training.html>

Library services

The UHL Library Service currently offers free training to UHL and LPT staff within Leicestershire. The Library runs several sessions aimed at providing you with the knowledge and skills to find relevant information quickly and easily for your everyday practice. Details can be found on the UHL Library services website www.uhl-library.nhs.uk

The University of Leicester Clinical Sciences Library provides services to the staff and students of Leicester Medical School and NHS employees in Leicestershire. It houses the medicine, health and social care collections of the University. NHS staff are able to borrow up to 15 items at a time, use NHS networked PCs and access the Clinical Librarian Service. <http://www.le.ac.uk/li/clinical/index.html>

To receive this guide by email, please contact:
diane.baldwin@leicestercity.nhs.uk

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