

# Doing a systematic review

To produce a systematic stand-alone review we have to work through the following steps:

## Systematic reviews – the steps

### 1 The research question

- *First, generate ideas.*
- *Then, use those ideas to hone a research question and sub-questions that will drive, and give clear focus to, your review*

### 2 Planning your search

*Design a clear protocol, in which you describe how you'll carry out your review: the steps you'll take and the procedure you'll follow. At the very least, set out:*

- *What steps you'll need to follow*
- *Whether the review will be broad or narrow*
- *Where you will search for literature*
- *Which major keywords will dictate the material to be retrieved*
- *What screening criteria each paper needs to pass to be considered*
- *How you will record the screening qualifications of each paper*

### 3 Searching and screening

*Decide, in view of the purpose of the review, which papers are worth reading further. Use this screening list as a guide:*

- *Journals – you might limit your search to certain trusted ones*
- *Date of publication*
- *Named authors – you might limit your search to certain authors whose work is well-known in this area*
- *Location – where the research was undertaken (e.g. a hospital, health department, factory etc.)*
- *Funding – consider whether it was funded by a commercial concern, which might affect its impartiality*
- *Research question – you might only consider those that address a research question relevant to yours*
- *Type of methodology*
- *Population and sampling methodology – consider what size of sample was chosen and how the subjects were selected*
- *Intervention – consider what sort of intervention was involved and how the data was analysed*

### 4 Deciding what sources to use

- *Extract the data*
- *Assess the quality of the source*

### 5 Planning your review

*Make connections between the literature using techniques designed for qualitative and quantitative studies.*



<b>6</b>	Writing the first draft	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>7</b>	Editing	<input type="checkbox"/>

For more information, see *How to Write Your Literature Review*, Chapter 2.