COMPLETING A SCOPING REVIEW

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Family Medicine Focus

Scoping reviews examine relevant studies on a topic to map existing evidence, identify research gaps, and clarify key concepts in both peer reviewed and grey literature.[1] A rigorous methodology, scoping reviews employ comprehensive search strategies to address well-defined research questions[2] and are sometimes confused with systematic reviews because of methodological similarities. However, scoping reviews report on the landscape of a topic rather than single, particular questions about a topic.[2] The choice between a scoping and other review types depends on the research question and time or resource constraints.[2]

▶ GETTING STARTED

- **Assemble a research team.** Two or more reviewers are needed.[3-4] Key roles include a content expert, someone with scoping review experience, and a research librarian.[3-4]
- **Apply rigorous methods.** Following established guidelines for conducting (eg, *JBI Manual for Evidence Synthesis*) and reporting (eg, PRISMA-ScR) ensures rigor.
- **Select a review management tool.** Tools like Covidence or Rayyan streamline the review process and manage record keeping.
- **Formulate a research question.** The scoping review question defines scope and facilitates the development of eligibility criteria and search strategy.[4] The "P" of the Patient-Concept-Context (PCC) framework[4] may be tailored to "Population" in medical education research where the population may be trainees.
- **Develop eligibility criteria.** Specify population, study, and other factors that clearly identify which articles are to be included or excluded. The process is iterative, and criteria evolve throughout screening. Repetition ensures the revised criteria are applied to all records.[1,5]
- **Create a search strategy.** Scoping reviews require reproducible and reportable search strategies. A research librarian helps design and translate the search into multiple databases.[4] Supplementary searching techniques—gray literature, citation searching, and hand searching—help capture all relevant studies.[4-5]

🔍 SCREENING

- **Title/Abstract Screening:** Typically, two reviewers independently screen all records against eligibility criteria. Reasons for exclusion are not recorded at this stage. Conflict resolution is by consensus or designated team member(s).[4]
- **Full-Text Review:** Two members independently review the full text for eligibility. Conflict resolution is by consensus or designated team member(s). Detailed reporting of exclusion reasons is required at this stage.[4]

▦ DATA CHARTING

- Create and pilot a draft form before title/abstract screening.
- Key source information relevant to the review question is charted for each source. Detail how data were extracted and verified.[4]

◕ EVALUATION AND REPORTING

- Data are organized or mapped into themes reflecting the review's main objectives.[6]
- Results are presented in a chart, figure, or table.[4]
- Research implications should be presented as clear, specific recommendations.[4]
- If a quality assessment is included, practice recommendations can be presented and aligned with review findings.[4-5]

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