Evidence-Based Research

In December 2014 SEARCH together with the Centre for Evidence-Based Practice at Bergen University College took the initiative to establish an international network that would encourage an evidence-based research approach, particularly in clinical health research.

The Evidence-Based Research Network (EBRNetwork) aims to reduce waste in research by promoting:

**No new studies without prior systematic review of existing evidence**

Scientists assume that if they refer to well-known and central sources whilst preparing new research or when interpreting new results they fulfil this expectation i.e. they are being evidence-based. However, a number of studies clearly indicate that by not using systematic methodologies e.g. systematic reviews when identifying and using earlier research, scientists are biased. As a result, their arguments for the need of new research and their conclusions based on the new results are also biased.

The EBRNetwork acknowledges that it is both difficult and time consuming to apply a systematic approach to identify earlier studies. Therefore, the network also promotes:

**Efficient production, updating and dissemination of systematic reviews**

To summarise, the EBRNetwork was established in order to:

* Raise awareness of the need for scientists to be evidence-based
* Evaluate whether present research is evidence-based or not
* Develop and publish recommendations for researchers, funding agencies, ethic committees, editors, publishers and research decision-makers
* Identify and develop statistical methods to identify when enough studies have been published in order to have an unambiguous answer for a specific question
* Identify and develop methods to boost the production, updating and dissemination of systematic reviews. This will specifically include methods to automate the process of preparing a systematic review.

At the moment the EBRNetwork has prepared a road map for projects and publications where the SEARCH is a key partner. In addition, one or more PhD students will be involved, always with international collaboration and supervision.