

How to perform a Systematic Critical Review

6th September, 7th September, 5th October, 10th November and 14th December 2023.

The purpose of this five-day course is to help you publish a systematic, critical literature review. The pre-requirement is that you have selected your topic and found most of your articles to be included in the review. You should have worked out your research questions. The course consists of instruction, coaching, individual work, and group work with peer-review. The course is suitable for those whose topic is not suitable for a classical Cochrane review and, please note, this is not a course in how to perform a meta-analysis, i.e., it is not a course in statistics. If you have already taken the PhD-school one-day course on systematic critical literature reading, you can start directly on day two after agreement with the course administrator.

On day one, which is identical to the one-day course provided by the PhD School, we will discuss the various types of reviews and how these are designed. The three main aspects of a systematic review, namely the descriptive part, the quality aspect, and the result sections will be explained and discussed with help from the literature and own examples. Thereafter, the basic checklists for these three aspects will be discussed and how to deal with interpretation of the results, in light of the quality assessment of the reviewed articles.

On day two a research librarian will guide you on how to strengthen your searches. You will do individual work, assisted, and supervised as needed, so you must bring your own computer. Your preparation for the day consists of preparing search terms, i.e., subject heading and free text search terms (free text search are search terms and synonyms that will be searched in title and abstract) for at least two of the databases you are going to search. Furthermore, you should bring relevant articles for the review that can be used to validate and refine / expand your searches. Please come well-prepared for the day, so you have the best possible starting point to improve and optimize your searches. Those of you who do not need this service are free this day.

On day three, different checklists that are available for various study designs will be consulted and your own review brought into focus. You will be divided into groups and you will formulate your own review objectives, select your type of checklists, and determine if you are to design your own checklist or use one that already exists. In the latter case, you may have to modify it. The choice of items on your checklist must be defined and explained. On day two you will do a pilot study of your checklists to see if they work, so you must bring some of your articles.

On day four, approximately one month later, you will return to the course and can discuss any questions or problems with your group and the course leader. Ideally, you should have reviewed as many articles as possible using your checklists. The analysis of data and data interpretation will be discussed as well as the layout and contents of checklists and format of the report.

One day five, several months later, we shall work on everybody's data analysis and data reporting, plus look at the structure and lay-out of your final report. We shall make use of the group dynamics and the course leader is there to help everybody individually. Hopefully, by the end of this fifth session, the structure and contents of your systematic review is more or less completed, and you should be able to tie up loose ends and polish the last bits, ready to actually write the final report.

Because of the intensive coaching requirements of this course, the number of places is limited. If problems arise during the course, you are welcome to contact the course leader by e-mail for assistance.

Lecturers: Charlotte Leboeuf-Yde and Mette Brandt Eriksen

ECTS: 3,0 for all five days (0, 6 per day)

Time: Five days, 9am to 3pm

Venue: To be announced

Register by sending an email no later than 1st September 2023 to Lene Ververs Lververs@health.sdu.dk