

TYPE OF REVIEW CHARACTERIZED BY METHOD USED

Type and description	Search	Quality assessment	Synthesis	Analysis
<p>Critical review Aims to demonstrate that the author has made an extensive study of the literature and critically evaluated the quality thereof. Goes beyond just describing the literature, by including analysis or theoretical thinking to some extent. Typically results in a hypothesis or model.</p>	<p>Attempts to identify the most important works within a given area.</p>	<p>No formal quality assessment. Evaluates the quality based on the contribution of the work to the field.</p>	<p>Typically narrative, possibly. conceptually or chronologically.</p>	<p>Significant component: Seeks to identify theoretical contributions that incorporate existing theory or issue new theory.</p>
<p>Literature review Generic designation of published material undergoing new or more recent literature. May cover a very varied degree of performance. May contain in-depth research results.</p>	<p>May include comprehensive search.</p>	<p>May include quality assessment.</p>	<p>Typically narrative.</p>	<p>The analysis may be chronological, theoretical, thematic etc.</p>
<p>Mapping review / systematic map Maps and categorizes literature and identifies gaps in research, from which new reviews can be conducted.</p>	<p>The completeness of the search is determined by limitations in the time and extent of the review.</p>	<p>No formal quality assessment</p>	<p>Typically in graphic or tabular form</p>	<p>Describes the amount and quality of the literature, for example, divided by study design or other key elements.</p>

<p>Meta-analysis A statistical method that combines results of quantitative studies to provide a more accurate estimate of effect.</p>	<p>Aims at a comprehensive and exhaustive search. Can use the funnel plot to visualize the completeness of the search.</p>	<p>Quality assessment forms the basis for inclusion / exclusion and / or sensitivity analysis.</p>	<p>Graphically or in tabular form with narrative comments.</p>	<p>Numerical analysis of outcome measures, assuming absence of heterogeneity in the studies.</p>
<p>Mixed studies review / mixed method review Refers to any combination of methods where an essential component is a literature review (usually systematic). In a review context, it means a combination of review approaches, for example by combining qualitative and quantitative research and outcome and process studies.</p>	<p>Requires either a highly sensitive search to identify all relevant studies, or separate qualitative and quantitative search strategies.</p>	<p>Requires either a generic instrument for quality assessment or separate processes with corresponding checklists.</p>	<p>Typically, both components will be described narratively and in tables. Can also use graphical methods to combine qualitative and quantitative studies.</p>	<p>The analysis can describe both types of studies and investigate the correlation between characteristics or use gap analysis to identify aspects of one type of study that may be present in another type of study.</p>
<p>Overview Generic term: Summary of (medical) literature reviewing the literature and describing its characteristics.</p>	<p>May include a comprehensive literature search, depending on how systematic the overview is.</p>	<p>May include formal quality assessment, depending on how systematic the overview is.</p>	<p>A synthesis depends on how systematic the approach is. Are often narrative but can contain tables.</p>	<p>The analysis can be chronological, theoretical, thematic etc.</p>
<p>Qualitative systematic review / qualitative evidence synthesis Methods for compiling or comparing qualitative studies. Aims</p>		<p>Quality assessment of overall criteria:</p>	<p>Qualitative, narrative synthesis.</p>	

to join topics or theories based on conceptual elements that cross individual qualitative studies.	May apply selective or purposeful sampling of studies.	Credibility, reliability, dependability and verifiability.		Thematic analysis, but may include theoretical models.
<p>Rapid review</p> <p>Assessing the current knowledge about a given policy or practice topic, using systematic review methods to search for and qualify assessment of existing research. Often with a short deadline.</p>	The extent of the literature search depends on time limit.	Time-limited formal quality assessment.	Typically narrative and in tabular form.	Description of the amount of literature as well as the overall qualification and direction of evidence.
<p>Scoping review / evidence map</p> <p>Initial assessment of the potential amount of the scientific literature. The goal is to identify the type and extent of evidence (will typically include ongoing research). Provides an overview of a broad field.</p>	The completeness of the search is determined by limitations in the time and extent of the review. May include ongoing research.	No formal quality assessment.	Table form with narrative comments, possibly with visual presentation of the evidence.	Characterizes the quantity and quality of the literature, for example, by study design or other key elements. May indicate the need for new reviews.
<p>Systematic review</p> <p>Aims at a systematic search, quality assessment and synthesis of evidence, often based on guidelines for the preparation of systematic reviews.</p>	Aims at a comprehensive and exhaustive search.	The quality assessment may be crucial for inclusion / exclusion.	Typically narrative, possibly supplemented with tables.	Combines existing knowledge with recommendations for practice. Points out where there is lack of knowledge and uncertainties about the results and recommendations for future research.

<p>Systematic search and review Combines the strengths of the critical review with an extensive search process. Addresses typically broad questions with a view to provide a 'best evidence synthesis'.</p>	<p>Aims at a comprehensive and exhaustive search.</p>	<p>May contain quality assessment.</p>	<p>Minimal narrative and schematic summary of studies.</p>	<p>Summarizes existing knowledge, limitations and recommendations for practice.</p>
<p>Systematized review Attempts to include elements of the systematic review process but stops before a proper systematic review. Can typically be a post graduate assignment.</p>	<p>May include a comprehensive search.</p>	<p>May contain quality assessment.</p>	<p>Typically narrative, possibly supplemented with tables.</p>	<p>Summarizes the existing knowledge, uncertainty about results. Methodical limitations.</p>
<p>Umbrella review Refers specifically to a review that compares evidence from multiple reviews to one accessible and useful document. Focuses on a wide issue where there are competing interventions and emphasizes reviews that address these interventions and their results</p>	<p>Identification of reviews but not search for primary studies.</p>	<p>Quality assessment of primary studies in the included reviews or of the entire reviews.</p>	<p>Graphically and in tabular form with narrative comments.</p>	<p>Combines existing knowledge with recommendations for practice. Points out where there is a lack of knowledge and recommendations for future research.</p>
<p>Realist review Gathers knowledge about the mechanisms behind why and how complex social interventions work (or do not work) in certain situations. Includes several types of studies and largely gray literature.</p>	<p>Uses multiple search methods with a view to do a purposeful synthesis of literature for inclusion. An iterative search process, where one</p>	<p>Quality assessment is based on whether the method fits the research question (fitness for purpose), based on an assessment of both</p>	<p>A narrative, explain-based analysis with a starting point in a program theory. Combines (social) theory with empirical evidence in the</p>	<p>Making recommendations for policy makers around the intervention, especially regarding contextual factors.</p>

	stops first when literature is no longer identified that contributes to a new understanding of the intervention.	relevance and methodological rigor.	attempt to summarize and further develop the theory of theory.
--	--	-------------------------------------	--

References

Moher D, Stewart L, Shekelle P. All in the Family: systematic reviews, rapid reviews, scoping reviews, realist reviews, and more. *Syst Rev*. 2015 Dec 22;4(1):183.

Grant M J, Booth. A typology of reviews: an analysis of 14 review types and associated methodologies. *Health Information and Libraries Journal* 2009, 26, pp.91–108.

Pawson R, Greenhalgh T, Harvey G, Walshe K. Realist review – a new method of systematic review designed for complex policy interventions. *J Health Serv Res Policy* Vol 10 Suppl 1 July 2005: 21–34.

Hannes K. Chapter 4: Critical appraisal of qualitative research. In: Noyes J, Booth A, Hannes K, Harden A, Harris J, Lewin S, Lockwood C (edi-tors), *Supplementary Guidance for Inclusion of Qualitative Research in Cochrane Systematic Reviews of Interventions. Version 1 (updated August 2011)*. Cochrane Collaboration Qualitative Methods Group, 2011. Available from URL <http://cqrmg.cochrane.org/supplemental-handbook-guidance>