



## Types of Review Articles

Review articles provide synthesised, and often pre-appraised evidence that can save clinicians time in determining the state of knowledge on a topic, the effectiveness of an intervention or even in identifying common themes that emerge in the literature. There are, however, a number of different types of review articles, which vary in the degree of rigour employed in their respective search, appraisal, synthesis and analysis methodologies. It can be helpful to identify the type of review article you are reading, as this information will help you to appropriately appraise the article. All the review types described in the table (adapted from Grant & Booth, 2009)<sup>1</sup> below fall within the Syntheses category of the 6s Hierarchy of Pre-Appraised Evidence<sup>2</sup>. Knowing this, you can use the [Step 3 Appraising the Evidence flowchart](#) to help you identify appropriate tools with which to appraise your selected review.

Type of Review	Alternate Terms	Purpose	Search	Appraisal	Synthesis	Analysis
Systematic Review	Review	To systematically search for, appraise and synthesise the evidence following predetermined protocols	Exhaustive & comprehensive	May determine inclusion/exclusion	Narrative Tables	State of knowledge; Uncertainty of findings; Practice recommendations; Research recommendations
Meta-analysis	Can be a part of a systematic review	To statistically combine quantitative results to better indicate intervention effects	Exhaustive & comprehensive; May use funnel plot	May determine inclusion/exclusion &/or sensitivity analysis	Graphs Tables Narrative	Numerical – measures of effect
Scoping Review	Mapping Review; Systematic Map	To determine the scope (nature & extent) of available research evidence	Determined by time/scope; Can include research underway	Not typical	Tables Narrative (Graphs)	Quantity & quality of research; Key features of research e.g. study design; May identify research recommendations

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Critical Review		To critically evaluate the quality of the existing literature; Often results in hypothesis or model development	Identifies most significant research	No formal quality appraisal; Evaluates according to contribution	Narrative	Identifies conceptual contribution for theory development
Literature Review	Overview; Narrative Review	To provide an examination of current research; Generic term	May/may not be comprehensive	May or may not include quality appraisal	Narrative (Tables)	Chronological, conceptual, themes
Mixed Methods Review	Mixed Studies Review	To combine review approaches to incorporate e.g. both qualitative & quantitative, or outcome & process research	Separate search strategies for different bodies of literature usually required	Separate appraisal methods for each body of literature, or a generic tool applied	Tables Narrative Graphs	Correlation between bodies of literature; Gap analysis between bodies of literature
Qualitative Systematic Review	Qualitative Evidence Synthesis	To compare or integrate themes or constructs from qualitative studies	May be purposive sampling	Used to determine messages	Narrative	Thematic analysis; Conceptual models
Umbrella Review	Systematic Review of Systematic Reviews	To compile evidence from multiple reviews; broad in scope; highlights competing interventions and their findings	Search for reviews; Excludes primary studies	Quality assessment of included reviews and/or primary studies included in the reviews	Graphs Tables Narrative	State of knowledge; Practice recommendations; Research recommendations

### References:

- Grant, M. J., & Booth, A. (2009). A typology of reviews: An analysis of 14 review types and associated methodologies. *Health Information and Libraries Journal*, 26, 91-108.
- DiCenso, A., Bayley, L., & Haynes, R. B. (2009). Accessing pre appraised evidence: Fine-tuning the 5s model into a 6s model. *ACP Journal Club*, 151(3), JC3-2-JC3-3.