

Different methods for doing a literature review- how useful are they?

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THE ORIGINAL SYSTEMATIC REVIEW; OR SYSTEMATIC REVIEW WITH META-ANALYSIS



Cochrane



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COMPREHENSIVE SEARCHING; QUALITY APPRAISAL, STATISTICAL ANALYSIS (META ANALYSIS)



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SAMPLE OF APPROACHES TO DOING A LITERATURE REVIEW



Meta-aggregation: Hannes and Lockwood (2011) comprehensive search, appraisal and aggregation of findings

Meta-ethnography: Noblit and Hare (1988) purposive search, appraisal & interpretation of findings. 1st, 2nd and 3rd order interpretations

Thematic synthesis: Thomas and Harden (2008) conceptual saturation , appraisal & interpretation of findings.

Meta-synthesis: Walsh and Downe (2005) comprehensive search, appraisal & interpretation of findings

Integrative review: Whitemore and Knafl (2005). Comprehensive search, appraisal & interpretation of findings

Meta-analysis: Higgins and Green (2011)

VARIED USE OF TERMINOLOGY



Sabatino L, Stievano A, Rocco G, Kallio H, Pietila A, Kangasniemi M (2014) The dignity of the nursing profession: a meta-synthesis of qualitative research. *Nursing Ethics* vol 2 (6) 659-672 .

- Emphasis Noblit and Hare's ethnography, rather than meta-synthesis including purposeful selection of studies
- Laging B, Ford R, Bauer M (2015) A meta synthesis of factors influencing nursing home staff decisions to transfer residents to hospital. *JAN* 71 (10) 2224-2236
- Refers to Hannes and Lockwood's meta aggregation & lines of action.

REVIEW OF METHODS USED IN THE NURSING LITERATURE



Method: We undertook a form of review called a Focused Mapping Review and Synthesis described by Bradbury-Jones and colleagues

We reviewed the top six nursing journals from January 2017-April 2018

Inclusion criteria: any paper with 'review' in the title

We reviewed the papers for stated method used, search strategy, critical appraisal, method of analysis

RESULTS



- We found 35 named approaches to doing a literature review.
- Most common: systematic review (but this did not refer to SR with meta-analysis) and integrative review
- Other methods: critical literature review, qualitative evidence synthesis, umbrella systematic review, critical synthesis, meta-narrative review, mixed method review, narrative review, scoping review, realist review, meta aggregation, theoretical review, systematic review of qualitative and quantitative methods, overview of systematic review, meta synthesis

RESULTS



- We found 35 named approaches to doing a literature review.
- Not consistently indexed in journals.
- For example, one journal has two sections:
 - Literature review
 - Systematic review
- Integrative reviews were found in both sections in the same edition

SEARCHING



- All aimed for comprehensive searching using databases and PRISMA frequently used but not all did additional searches such as reference list searches.
- No evidence of sampling

APPRAISAL



- All reviewers undertook critical appraisal
- This referred to relevance and/or quality
- Some used this as an inclusion criteria and pre-set quality standards but most did not.
- Most reviewers undertook an inclusive approach.
- The purpose of appraisal not always clear

DATA ANALYSIS



- Different terms used for analysis- narrative, content, thematic.
- Often not explained
- For example in a SR where meta- analysis was possible but not undertake, lack of clarity on how to proceed.

COMMON STRUCTURE OF ALL SYSTEMATIC REVIEWS



- Research question
- Searching- comprehensive or expansive
- Critical appraisal
- Data analysis
- Writing up

IMPLICATIONS FOR RESEARCHERS AND STUDENTS



- Researchers and MSc/PhD students need to engage with the ongoing debate about different methods
- Adhere to a specific method and use the original source
- Comprehensive searching is more than database searching
- Appraisal needs to have a purpose
- Approach to analysis needs to be clearly stated

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Whittemore R. & Knafk K. (2005) The integrative review: updated methodology. *Journal of Advanced Nursing* 52, 546-553.