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MOSAIC
Methods of Synthesis and Integration Center

Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis

Systematic review is the process of identifying studies related to the same topic. The process is systematic because the review team (a) determines what types of studies will be identified before the process begins and (b) follows an established series of steps, outlined below.

- Formulate research question(s)
- Create protocol and define study inclusion criteria
- Conduct a literature search
- Screen studies for inclusion
- Gather and describe study characteristics

Meta-analysis is the statistical method used to combine numerical results from studies included in the systematic review. A review team can estimate the average intervention effect or explore how program and sample characteristics determine program effectiveness.

- Compute effect sizes using summary statistics
- Combine effect sizes to estimate average effect
- Explore variation in effects
- Evaluate sources of bias
- Contextualize, communicate, and translate effects for decision makers

After conducting a systematic review, you can stop and summarize findings descriptively ***or*** conduct a meta-analysis.

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