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## Section 4 Evidence Component

### Acquiring Evidence Part 3: Searching for Evidence

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#### Overview

The goal of this session is to assist the participant in linking the practice question to the 2nd step in the EPB process – “acquiring” the best available evidence. Strategies for identifying the important components in the practice question and using these components to guide the evidence search are presented.

#### Objectives

- Identify library resources for accessing evidence.
- Describe strategies for conducting an evidence search.
- Describe the concept of search terms (e.g. MeSH terms).
- Identify various search portals such as CINAHL, PubMed, Medline, OVID, and Cochrane Library.

#### Key Points

- Once you have developed the practice question and have determined the type of evidence needed to answer the question, the next step is to conduct a systematic and thorough evidence search. It is helpful to develop a strategy prior to conducting the evidence search. A sound search plan focuses (streamlines) the search execution and builds rigor into this step.
- An initial strategy in planning the search is to identify the key concepts in the practice question (PICO-T terms) and align these with possible MeSH search terms. It is helpful to have a librarian assist with this step.
- Establishing inclusion and exclusion criteria is essential. Inclusion criteria delimit the type of evidence the EBP team will consider (i.e. research versus non-research, publication date, population). Exclusion criteria define the type of evidence that will not be considered.
- At least two people need to participate in determining which articles are included in the final body of evidence (see Roadmap 1 question 12.b).
- Learning to navigate different search portals can be challenging for clinicians. Librarians and tutorials are available to assist in this step:
  1. [PubMed Tutorials](#)
  2. [EBSCO Tutorials](#)
- To support future replication, it is essential to document the search strategy and search results.



#### Suggested Activities

##### Practice Application Exercises

Librarian assisted evidence search:

1. Identify onsite library staff and location. If there is not an onsite library, identify the names of staff, phone extensions, and hours of operation of affiliated VA facilities that may provide library assistance.
2. Invite your librarian to guide participants through an interactive, hands-on evidence search using a pre-determined clinical scenario and practice question.
3. Have the participants develop a reproducible search strategy based on the identified components in their own practice question. Have participants conduct their own search (with assistance) using the available search engines. Have the participants document their search strategy. Include:
  - a. Search terms
  - b. Types of evidence needed to answer the practice question
  - c. Search Engines and websites (e.g., Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews, PubMed, MEDLINE, CINAHL, VA/DOD Guidelines, etc)
  - d. Inclusion and Exclusion criteria

Have participants complete search portal (EBSCO, CINAHL, PubMed) tutorials as needed.

##### Personal Commitment to EBP Exercise

1. Ask the participants to share some of the important take-home points that they have learned about this step in the EBP process. How will you use what you learned today in your practice?
2. Have participants write down personal goals for acquiring evidence.

**Materials** are available through the provided hyperlink:

**Handout:** [ONS Roadmap Worksheet 1 questions 9-13](#)

**Other Resources** Computer with internet access.

**Suggested Time** 90 minutes