
Section 4 Evidence Component

Appraising Evidence Part 3: Appraising a Body of Evidence

Overview

The goal of this session is to introduce participants to principles of evidence synthesis.

Objectives

- Discuss what is meant by a “body of evidence”.
- Define the terms quality, quantity and consistency in terms of evidence synthesis.
- Describe how the collective body of evidence is summarized and graded.

Key Points

- The *Body of Evidence* (BOE) refers to the collective pieces of evidence that address the same clinical question.
- Once each piece of evidence is appraised for quality and judged to be a BOE “keeper”, the next step is evaluate the BOE for quality, quantity and consistency – this is called *evidence synthesis*. Again, this is done by a team, not an individual.
- For the BOE, evaluating *quality* involves a consideration of the individual quality ratings aggregated together. *Quantity* is the number of studies, as well as the magnitude of effect. *Consistency* is the extent to which studies report similar results.
- It is helpful to use an *Evidence Synthesis Table* to summarize the results visually (ONS Roadmap I, item 14).
- The final step is to write a statement summarizing the overall strength and grade. This summary statement guides practice recommendations. Keep in mind that *quality + quantity + consistency = overall strength*. There are a number of standard schemes available for grading strength (see Evidence Summary handout).
- This module links to ONS EBP Roadmap I, item 15a.

Suggested Activities

ONS EBP Video Exercise

After viewing the video, discuss the following questions:

1. How much evidence is needed – how much is enough?
2. Who all should be involved with the critical appraisal process?
3. What factors do I consider when evaluating applicability to practice?

Practice Application Exercise

Critical Appraisal Exercise 2: Provide the participants with a set of articles relevant to a practice question. Provide group with appraisal tools/forms.

Evidence-Based Practice



Practice Application Exercise continued

Note: the number of articles may vary depending on the size of the group, but there should be at least 3 articles to illustrate synthesis.

1. Divide the participants into dyads or small groups. Have each dyad/group appraise one article. Have each dyad/group present their findings to the larger group.
2. Guide the large group in completing an Evidence Synthesis Table.
3. Use the completed Evidence Synthesis Table to guide the group in formulating an evidence summary statement and BOE grade.
4. Generate a discussion on how “confident” participants are in making a practice recommendation based on their experience with this activity. Possible questions include:
 - a. How does critical appraisal impact confidence in making practice recommendations?
 - b. How does critically examining evidence enhance our clinical expertise?
 - c. How does knowing and critically examining the evidence support our ability to engage patient preferences in making clinical decisions?

Personal Commitment to EBP Exercise

1. Ask the participants to share some of the important take-home points that they have learned in this lesson.
2. How will you use what you learned today in your practice?

Materials are available through the provided hyperlink:

Handouts

1. [ONS EBP Roadmap Worksheet Part I](#) items 14 & 15a.
2. [Evidence Summary](#)
3. [Evidence Synthesis Table Directions](#)

ONS EBP Video 7 [Committing to Our Evidence-Based Practice Vision through Appraising the Evidence Part 2](#)

Other Resources Computer with ability to show video – requires access to ONS intranet website.

Suggested Time 60 minutes