

Advanced searching: Review of reviews

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Review of reviews: What?

- Evaluating effectiveness of interventions based on previous systematic reviews only
- WHY: To reduce time for searching and critical appraisal
- WHEN: For comparing many interventions often in several patient subgroups



Typical question and result

- Q: Intervention-based OR policy question
- Example: Which patients will benefit from using drug-eluting coronary stents?

Acute coronary syndrome - Non-Q infarction -
two-vessel disease; acute - subacute - later

- Result: Knowledge base to build care pathways



Rehabilitation in children with CP

Time frame: HTA in two years

- Multiple disease types: Spastic/dystonic/mixed, hemiplegic/diplegic, levels...
- Multiple interventions: Physical therapy, speech therapy, surgery, Botox...
- Therapies continue over many years
- Natural maturation/ development



Policy question & problems

- How to determine best combination of therapies for each child?
- Low incidence & heterogeneity in presentation: Large RCTs unlikely
- Tradition of single subject studies



HTA question series

Which interventions

- are available
- are used in this country
- have been studied sufficiently

Aim: An HTA report with overview of effectiveness of relevant therapies





Literature search

Cerebral palsy	x
CP and physiotherapy	x
CP; RCT (pt)	x
CP; review (pt)	x
CLIB: CP	x

Prevalent therapies

Good reviews available	Complex issues, excluded	To do
Surgery	Occupational therapy	Orthoses
Botulinum toxin	Speech therapy	Physiotherapy, various types
etc.	etc.	Intensity of physiotherapy

Orthoses in CP

- Upper limb - lower limb
- Static - dynamic - flexible
- For mobile children - dependent children

- Several systematic reviews available
- Each one appraised for quality: PICO, blinding, conclusions ...



Quality of reviews

- Searches usually described
- Many study designs accepted
- Outcome measurements problematic
- Follow-up times short
- Conclusions not always based on findings



Usability

- Some clear results
 - body / spinal posture support: no effect
- Some ambiguity
 - ankle orthoses: most types give short-time results
- Some lack of information
 - upper limb casts: variable results



Next step - HTA on CP

- Conclusions on intensity of physiotherapy
- Using available material for surgery, botulinum toxin
- Going for original studies on orthoses, updating the searches of older reviews



Reviews of reviews

- Most useful for urgent policy questions
- Need strict quality control
- Updating searches may be necessary
- We need to learn more about this method!



