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Conduct Literature Search and Review

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What is a Literature Review?

• An extensive examination of research sources to generate a picture of...
• What is known and not known about a clinical problem to determine if the knowledge is ready for use in practice
Purpose of the Literature Review (1)

- Clarify the research problem
- Verify the significance of the research problem
- Specify the purpose of the study
- Identify relevant studies and theories
- Develop a research framework
- Clarify objectives, research questions, or research hypotheses
Purposes of the Literature Review (2)

- Develop definitions of major variables
- Identify limitations and assumptions
- Select a research design
- Identify methods of measurement
- Direct data collection and analysis
- Interpret findings
Critiquing the Literature Review

- Are relevant studies identified and described?
- Are the studies critiqued by the researcher?
- Are the references current?
- Is a summary of current knowledge provided?

- Also see the assignment guideline, entitled “Major content sections of a research report and related critiquing guidelines”
Systematic reviews, periodically updated, of randomized trials of the effects of health care

- From all sources, in all languages
- The Cochrane Collaboration: www.cochrane.org
Review the Following Terms

- What is conceptual literature?
- What is data based/empirical literature?
- What are the differences between primary and secondary literature?
- What are the advantages of each of these four types of literature?
Conceptual Literature

- Literature that deals with ideas and topics from a theoretical or personal point of view
- Not include research studies or other data based literature

The advantages of conceptual literature include:

- A perspective that may be personal or subjective to an expert or one that provides an overview of a large amount of knowledge
- Sometimes this may be all we know, i.e., there is no empirical literature on a topic
Data Based/Empirical Literature

- In this type of writing, we see work that has gone through a formal process of research or scientific analysis
- There is DATA that is used to demonstrate a point
- An advantage would be that there is an OBJECTIVITY not found in conceptual literature
- One must be careful, after all, researchers are human and are certainly capable of skewing data!
Primary Literature

- This is literature where the author is the actual developer of the material
  - Example: Jean Watson’s writing about how the theory of caring can be applied to CHF clients
  - Example: Jones’ reporting on the results of her study on outcomes

- In this case the work is FRESH from the horse’s mouth, so to speak. The primary advantage of primary literature!
Secondary Literature

- The author presents the work of another, such as a theory or a study
  - Example: The writer writes an article about how he or she used Jean Watson’s theory of caring or how his or her students like that work
  - Example: The writer summarizes the literature in a particular area from, such as, a review of the literature on pain treatment
A good literature review for a research study takes all these types into consideration.

There should be a preponderance of primary data based literature.

Secondary and conceptual literature may round out the review but should NOT be the dominant forms.

The only exception would be if there is NO data based literature.
Apply What You Know...

- The next slide has a variety of citations from the literature
- Review these one by one, and write down on a piece of paper whether they are
  - Primary versus secondary sources
  - Conceptual versus data based

- On the following slide you will find the answers
Check Your Answers Here...

- # 1 is primary, conceptual
- # 2 is primary, data based
- # 3 is primary, data based
- # 4 is primary, conceptual
- # 5 is primary, conceptual
- # 6 is secondary and probably considered as data based, although it includes both conceptual literature and empirical data
- # 7 is primary, data based
• Unless the author indicates it’s someone else’s work in the title, you may not be aware of secondary literature until you read the article.

• It is important to get the primary study whenever possible.