

Purpose and procedure

The general purpose of *Evidence-Based Mental Health* is to select from the health-related literature* those articles reporting important advances in treatment, diagnosis, aetiology, prognosis, continuing education, economic evaluation, and qualitative research in mental health. We select and summarise the highest quality original and review articles. Experts in the field comment on the clinical relevance and context of each study.

Our target audience includes psychiatrists, psychologists, nurses, social workers, occupational therapists, pharmacists, and other professionals whose work may be enhanced by up to date research. *Evidence-Based Mental Health* is multidisciplinary. It covers studies of adults, children, older adults, people who have developed psychiatric or psychological problems as a result of trauma, and people with learning disabilities, head injuries, drug and alcohol problems, and personality disorders.

Relevant articles which meet these criteria are summarised using a structured abstract. Articles are reviewed by experts in the field who provide commentaries describing the context of the article, methodological problems that may affect interpretation, and recommendations for clinical application.

The Royal College of Psychiatrists, the British Psychological Society and the BMJ Publishing Group publish *Evidence-Based Mental Health*.

CRITERIA FOR SELECTION AND REVIEW OF ARTICLES

Articles are considered for inclusion in *Evidence-Based Mental Health* if they are:

- ▶ original or review articles
- ▶ in English
- ▶ about humans
- ▶ about topics that are important to clinical practice in the field of mental health
- ▶ use analysis techniques consistent with the study design.

Studies of prevention, treatment, quality improvement, and continuing education must also:

- ▶ randomly allocate participants to comparison groups
- ▶ measure an outcome of known or probable clinical importance.

Studies of causation (aetiology) must also:

- ▶ collect data prospectively if possible
- ▶ identify a comparison group(s) for the outcome of interest.

Studies of diagnosis must also:

- ▶ include a spectrum of participants, some, but not all of whom have the disorder of interest
- ▶ include a diagnostic (gold) standard
- ▶ ensure each participant receives both the new test and some form of the diagnostic standard.

Studies of prognosis must also:

- ▶ include an inception cohort of participants (first onset or assembled at a uniform point in the development of the disease), all initially free of the outcome of interest.

Studies of prevalence must also:

- ▶ include a valid and repeatable definition of the disease or disorder
- ▶ employ adequate sampling methods.

Studies of the cost-effectiveness of interventions must also:

- ▶ compare alternative diagnostic or therapeutic services or quality improvement strategies
- ▶ compare activities on the basis of the outcomes produced (effectiveness) and resources consumed (costs)
- ▶ include data from real (not hypothetical) participants from studies which meet the quality criteria for other articles described above
- ▶ present results in terms of the incremental or additional costs and outcomes of one intervention over another

Review articles

In review articles, at least one article included in the review must meet the quality criteria for treatment, diagnosis, prognosis, causation, and cost effectiveness studies described above. Review articles must also:

- ▶ clearly state the clinical topic
- ▶ describe sources and methods
- ▶ explicitly state inclusion and exclusion criteria for selecting articles.

Qualitative studies must meet the following criteria:

- ▶ the content must relate to how people feel or experience situations that relate to mental health care
- ▶ data collection methods must be appropriate for qualitative studies. (For example, unstructured interviews, semi-structured interviews, participant observation of people in natural settings, focus groups, review of documents or text).

*Journals currently reviewed

Acta Psychiatrica Scandinavica
Addiction
Age and Ageing
American Journal of Gastroenterology
American Journal of Medicine
American Journal of Psychiatry
Annals of Emergency Medicine
Annals of Internal Medicine
Annals of Surgery
ANS Advances in Nursing Sciences
Applied Nursing Research
Archives of Disease in Childhood Neonatal and Fetal
Archives of General Psychiatry
Archives of Internal Medicine
Archives of Neurology
Archives of Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine
Arthritis and Rheumatism
Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry
Behaviour Research and Therapy
Birth
BJOG
BMC Psychiatry
BMJ
British Journal of Clinical Psychology

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British Journal of General Practice
British Journal of Psychiatry
British Journal of Surgery
Canadian Journal of Gastroenterology
Canadian Journal of Infection Control
Canadian Journal of Psychiatry
Canadian Respiratory Journal
Circulation
CMAJ
Cochrane Database of Systematic Review
Critical Care Medicine
Developmental Medicine and Child Neurology
Diabetes Care
Diabetic Medicine
Eur Child Adolesc Psychiatry
Evid Rep Technol Assess (Full Rep)
Gastroenterology
Gut
Health Education and Behavior
Health Psychology
Health technology assessment reports
Heart
Journal of Nursing Scholarship
International Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry
JAMA
Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology
Journal of Advanced Nursing
Journal of Affective Disorders
Journal of Anxiety Disorders
Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry and Allied
Disciplines
Journal of Clinical Epidemiology
Journal of Clinical Nursing
Journal of Clinical Psychiatry
Journal of Clinical Psychopharmacology
Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology
Journal of Family Practice
Journal of Infectious Disease
Journal of Manipulative and Physical Therapy
Journal of Neurology, Neurosurgery, and Psychiatry
Journal of Pediatrics
Journal of Psychosomatic Research
Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent
Psychiatry
Journal of the American Geriatrics Society
Journal of Vascular Surgery
Lancet
Medical Care
Medical Journal of Australia
Medicine
Midwifery
Molecular Psychiatry
Neurology
New England Journal of Medicine
Pain
Pediatrics
PLOS Medicine
Psychiatric Services
Psychological Medicine
Psychosomatic Medicine
Qualitative Health Research
Schizophrenia Bulletin
Schizophrenia Research
Social Science and Medicine
Spine
Stroke
Thorax
Western Journal of Nursing Research.