

checklist for textual evidence: expert opinion

Critical Appraisal tools for use in JBI Systematic Reviews

Introduction

JBI is an international research organisation based in the Faculty of Health and Medical Sciences at the University of Adelaide, South Australia. JBI develops and delivers unique evidence-based information, software, education and training designed to improve healthcare practice and health outcomes. With over 70 Collaborating Entities, servicing over 90 countries, JBI is a recognised global leader in evidence-based healthcare.

## JBI Systematic Reviews

The core of evidence synthesis is the systematic review of literature of a particular intervention, condition or issue. The systematic review is essentially an analysis of the available literature (that is, evidence) and a judgment of the effectiveness or otherwise of a practice, involving a series of complex steps. JBI takes a particular view on what counts as evidence and the methods utilised to synthesise those different types of evidence. In line with this broader view of evidence, JBI has developed theories, methodologies and rigorous processes for the critical appraisal and synthesis of these diverse forms of evidence in order to aid in clinical decision-making in healthcare. There now exists JBI guidance for conducting reviews of effectiveness research, qualitative research, prevalence/incidence, etiology/risk, economic evaluations, textual evidence, diagnostic test accuracy, mixed-methods, umbrella reviews and scoping reviews. Further information regarding JBI systematic reviews can be found in the [JBI Evidence Synthesis Manual](https://jbi-global-wiki.refined.site/space/MANUAL).

## JBI Critical Appraisal Tools

All systematic reviews incorporate a process of critique or appraisal of the research evidence. The purpose of this appraisal is to assess the methodological quality of a study and to determine the extent to which a study has addressed the possibility of bias in its design, conduct and analysis. All papers selected for inclusion in the systematic review (that is – those that meet the inclusion criteria described in the protocol) need to be subjected to rigorous appraisal by two critical appraisers. The results of this appraisal can then be used to inform synthesis and interpretation of the results of the study. JBI Critical appraisal tools have been developed by the JBI and collaborators and approved by the JBI Scientific Committee following extensive peer review. Although designed for use in systematic reviews, JBI critical appraisal tools can also be used when creating Critically Appraised Topics (CAT), in journal clubs and as an educational tool.

JBI Critical Appraisal Checklist for textual evidence: expert opinion

Reviewer \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Author\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Year\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Record Number\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Yes | No | Unclear | Not applicable |
| 1. Is the source of the opinion clearly identified? | □ | □ | □ | □ |
| 1. Does the source of opinion have standing in the field of expertise? | □ | □ | □ | □ |
| 1. Are the interests of the relevant population the central focus of the opinion? | □ | □ | □ | □ |
| 1. Does the opinion demonstrate a logically defended argument to support the conclusions drawn? | □ | □ | □ | □ |
| 1. Is there reference to the extant literature? | □ | □ | □ | □ |
| 1. Is any incongruence with the literature/sources logically defended? | □ | □ | □ | □ |

Overall appraisal: Include □ Exclude □ Seek further info □

Comments (Including reason for exclusion)

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Explanation of textual evidence: expert opinion critical appraisal tool

How to cite: *McArthur A, Klugarova J, Yan H, Florescu S. Innovations in the systematic review of text and opinion. Int J Evid Based Healthc. 2015;13(3):188–195.*

Answers: Yes, No, Unclear or Not/Applicable

**1. Is the source of the opinion clearly identified?**

To assess an opinion, it is important to locate its source. ***Ask:***

* Are the authors clearly identified (Including their name, their role/ experience /qualifications)?

**2. Does the source of the opinion have standing in the field of expertise?**

Determining whether the author is informed or possesses knowledge about a specific subject is a key stage in assessing the credibility of the opinion. ***Ask***:

* For health professionals or health researchers, what are their qualifications, current role and other indicators such as fellowships or licensures? Are any allegiances or affiliations with specific organisations or groups known?
* For patients/consumers/advocates, what are their experiences and role?

**3. Are the interests of the relevant population the central focus of the opinion?**

The expert opinion should focus on improving outcomes and it is important to determine that the opinion has such a focus. ***Ask:***

* Does the paper take a position that advantages a profession or a specific institution or body; or financial or political objectives, rather than patients, clients, communities or health gain?

**4. Does the opinion demonstrate a logically defended argument to support the conclusions drawn?**

An opinion without a logical argument behind it is difficult to accept as a legitimate guide for practice/action. It is therefore important to look at the degree to which a logical argument to defend the conclusions drawn in the opinion is evident. ***Ask:***

* Does the opinion ‘make sense’ and demonstrate an attempt to justify the stance it takes?
* Is the opinion the result of an analytical process drawing on experience or the literature?
* Does the argument comply with Toulmin’s model for argumentation?

**5. Is there reference to the extant literature?**

It is important to determine whether or not the opinion expressed comes from a position of awareness of extant evidence. ***Ask:***

* What extant literature does the author present to support the arguments?

**6. Is any incongruence with the literature/sources logically defended?**

Is there any reference provided in the text to ascertain if the opinion expressed has wider support?

***Ask:***

* Has the author demonstrated awareness of alternate or dominant opinions in the literature?
* Have they provided an informed defence of their position as it relates to other or similar discourses?