

checklist for textual evidence: Policy

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: policy/consensus guidelines

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

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

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Yes | No | Unclear | Not applicable |
| 1. Are the developers of the policy/ consensus guideline (and any allegiences/affiliations) clearly identified? | □ | □ | □ | □ |
| 1. Do the developers of the policy/ consensus guideline have standing in the field of expertise? | □ | □ | □ | □ |
| 1. Are appropriate stakeholders involved in developing the policy/guideline and do the conclusions drawn represent the views of their intended users? | □ | □ | □ | □ |
| 1. Are biases due to competing interests acknowledged and responded to? | □ | □ | □ | □ |
| 1. Are the processes of gathering and summarizing the evidence described? | □ | □ | □ | □ |
| 1. Is any incongruence with the extant literature/evidence logically defended? 2. Are the methods used to develop recommendations described? | □  □ | □  □ | □  □ | □  □ |

Overall appraisal: Include □ Exclude □ Seek further info □

Comments (Including reason for exclusion)

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Explanation of textual evidence: policy/consensus guidelines 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. Are the developers of the policy/consensus guideline (and any allegiances/affiliations) clearly identified?**

To assess a policy or guideline that seeks to direct action, it is important to be aware of who was involved in its development. ***Ask:***

* Are the authors clearly identified (Including their name, their role/experience/qualifications?).
* Are any allegiances or affiliations with specific organisations or groups known?

**2. Do the developers of the policy/consensus guideline have standing in the field of expertise**?

Determining whether the developers are informed or possess knowledge about a specific subject is a key stage in assessing the credibility of a policy or guideline. ***Ask***:

* For health professionals or health researchers, what are their qualifications, current role and other indicators such as fellowships or licensures? (Reviewers may wish to follow up the standing of the source by consulting with experts in the field of expertise; checking accreditation rolls; or contacting the source for further information.)
* For patients/consumers/advocates, what are their experiences and role?

**3. Are appropriate stakeholders involved in developing the policy/consensus guideline and do the conclusions drawn represent the views of their intended users?**

Guideline and policy development requires involvement of (or at least consultation with) both health care providers who will be expected to implement them and the receivers of healthcare (patients/clients/consumers). ***Ask:***

* Who are the central stakeholders that might be impacted by this policy/guideline?
* Are these stakeholders either part of the development group; or is there evidence that they have been consulted?

**4. Are biases due to competing interests acknowledged and responded to?**

All policy/guideline development groups are likely to include competing interests and to be subject to a range of biases. The quality of the development process is improved if competing interests and potential biases are identified and addressed. ***Ask:***

* Are potential competing interests identified in the policy/guideline document?
* Are potential biases identified in the policy/guideline document?
* Are any strategies to acknowledge and address competing interests and biases presented in the policy/guideline document?

**5. Are the processes of gathering and summarizing the evidence described?**

Some policy/guideline developers search for and use published evidence reviews (systematic reviews etc.), published and unpublished papers; and local clinical and activity data. Others commission a full evidence review. For our purpose, it is important to assess the quality of gathering and summarizing data. ***Ask:***

* Are the processes involved in gathering and analysing extant evidence detailed?
* Are the approaches taken rigorous?

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

Whilst policy/guideline developers may search for and refer to synthesized evidence and because of possible competing interests and local biases, the external evidence may not concur with the conclusions or recommendations embodied in the resulting policy or guideline. ***Ask:***

* Is there any incongruence between the conclusions/recommendations and the extant literature?
* If there is, is this acknowledged in the paper/document?
* Is there a logical defence of any position taken that is in conflict with the extant literature?

**7. Are the methods used to develop recommendations described?**

Policy and guideline developers usually spend a great deal of time and exert much effort on developing final conclusions or recommendations and seek to balance the evidence with the expertise of the development group and the views of other stakeholders (frequently seeking a consensus view). Thus, a description of how recommendations or conclusions are developed is of importance. ***Ask:***

* Is the process of developing recommendations or conclusions documented?
* Do these processes suggest that a balance between opinion and evidence was sought?