

# 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.