

Specialist Unit for Review Evidence (SURE)

Questions to assist with the critical appraisal of a systematic review¹

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Citation:
Study Design:

Questions ** relate to whether the methodology used is described – eg independently in duplicate

	Yes	Can't tell	No
1. Does the review address a clearly focused question/hypothesis			
Population/Problem?			
Intervention?			
Comparator/control?			
Outcomes? Can you identify the primary outcome?			
2. Did the authors look for the appropriate types of paper? Did the studies address the review's question and have an appropriate design?			
3. Is the search likely to have identified all the relevant evidence?			
Sufficient range of databases searched? Date range appropriate?			
Good range of search terms (indexed terms and keywords)			
Reference list/bibliography checking?			
Hand search (journals)			
Grey literature searched (unpublished work) Websites? Contacting experts/manufacturers?			
Search terms/ strategy provided? Were they comprehensive?			
Search results provided (no of hits and final studies)? Flow diagram?			
All languages included?			

4. Are all relevant studies likely to have been included?	
Are the inclusion and exclusion criteria stated?	
Is the study selection process described? **	
Multiple papers relating to same study identified?	
Is the data extraction process described? **	
5. Did the authors assess the quality (rigour) of the included studies?	
Is the assessment process described? **	
6. Information about included studies Is key information provided (eg study design, population, interventions, comparators, outcomes, areas of potential bias)?	
7. If the results of the review have been combined (meta-analysis), was this appropriate?	
Were the studies sufficiently similar in design and results?	
Are the reasons for any variations discussed?	
8. Are results provided for all included studies? Do the conclusions reflect all results? Is the quality assessment of individual studies reflected in the results?	
9. Were all the important outcomes considered?	
10. Is any sponsorship/conflict of interest reported?	
11. Finally...consider: Did the authors identify any limitations? Date of review – is it likely to be out of date? Are the conclusions the same in the abstract and the full text?	

This checklist should be cited as:

Specialist Unit for Review Evidence (SURE) 2013. *Questions to assist with the critical appraisal of systematic reviews* available at: <http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/specialist-unit-for-review-evidence/resources/critical-appraisal-checklists>

¹ Adapted and updated from the former Health Evidence Bulletins Wales (HEBW) checklist with reference to the [NICE Public Health Methods Manual](#) (2012) and previous versions of the [Critical Appraisal Skills Programme](#) (CASP) checklists.