

PICOT & Search Query Worksheet

P Patient or Population The most important characteristics of the patient/population. <i>e.g., age, gender, ethnicity, disease/condition/health problem</i>	
I Intervention; Prognostic Factor; Exposure The main intervention being considered. <i>e.g., drug or other treatment, diagnostic/screening test</i>	
C Comparison (if appropriate) The main alternative to compare with the intervention. <i>e.g., placebo, standard therapy, no treatment, the gold standard</i>	
O Outcome What you are trying to accomplish, measure, improve, affect. <i>e.g., reduced mortality or morbidity, improved memory, accurate and timely diagnosis</i>	
T Time The time involved to demonstrate an outcome. <i>e.g., time it takes for the intervention to achieve the outcome; the time over which populations are observed for the outcome (e.g., quality of life) to occur, given a certain condition.</i>	
Write out your clinical question: <div style="height: 40px; border: 1px solid black; margin-top: 5px;"></div>	

Search Strategy Development

Use the categories and words in the PICOT analysis to guide the development of a Boolean search statement by placing ANDs between the different concepts, and ORs between synonyms.

		Primary search term		Synonym 1		Synonym 2
P			OR		OR	
	AND					
I			OR		OR	
	AND					
C			OR		OR	
	AND					
O			OR		OR	
	AND					
T			OR		OR	

Filter Search Results by Appropriate Study Design

Look for articles in the search results that have the highest level of evidence for your type of question.
Some databases offer the option to filter results by publication type.

Type of Question	Ideal Type of Study (publication/article type)
<input type="checkbox"/> Therapy	RCT (Randomized Control Trial)
<input type="checkbox"/> Prevention	RCT > Cohort Study > Case Control
<input type="checkbox"/> Diagnosis	Prospective, blind controlled trial comparison to gold standard
<input type="checkbox"/> Prognosis	Cohort Study > Case Control > Case Series/Case Report
<input type="checkbox"/> Etiology/Harm	RCT > Cohort Study > Case Control
<input type="checkbox"/> Cost analysis	economic analysis
* Systematic reviews/meta-analyses often provide the best answers to clinical questions.	

List inclusion criteria

Age	
Sex	
Publication dates	
Language of publication	
Other	

Check where you plan to search

<input type="checkbox"/> PubMed	<input type="checkbox"/> PsycINFO	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> CINAHL	<input type="checkbox"/> Cochrane	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Web of Science	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> UpToDate	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

You can now use these terms, criteria, and filters in a database search to find relevant articles.

Type of Question	Ways to phrase your PICO(T)
Diagnosis / Diagnostic Test / Screening	In _____ (P) are/is _____ (I) compared with _____ (C) more accurate in diagnosing _____ (O)?
Intervention / Therapy	In _____ (P), what is the effect of _____ (I) compared with _____ (C) on _____ (O) within _____ (T) ?
Prognosis / Prediction	In patients who have/are _____ (P), does _____ (I) compared to _____ (C) influence/predict _____ (O) over _____ (T)?
Etiology	Are _____ (P) who have _____ (I) at increased/decreased risk for/of _____ (O) compared with (P) with/without _____ (C)?
Prevention	For _____ (P) does the use of _____ (I) reduce the future risk of _____ (O) compared with _____ (C)?