

Some tips on using Consensus

[Consensus](#) is an AI-powered search tool of peer-reviewed sources. It identifies academic research related to your research question, then it uses AI to synthesize an evidence-based summary of findings from a specific set of research papers. Every claim it makes is based on, and linked to, a real paper and includes citations. These built-in features provide guardrails for using this AI tool responsibly.

Questions

Consensus works best when the questions are clear and direct. You don't have to be wordy, just tell it what you want. It is possible to include details in your research question, such as the context, the population, and the variables you are interested in (maybe from your PICO outline).

Example:

- *"Does caffeine improve memory?"*
- *"What is the difference between caffeine intake to improve memory and cognition in older adults with mild dementia compared to prescription medications that might be for the same use?"*

The first is a yes/no question and Consensus will produce a yes/mixed/possibly/no visual 'meter' of the answers that the research provides. It will include a narrative summary and tabular summary of papers also.

You can continue a thread by asking follow-up questions of any paper or set of papers/results.

Filters

Use some of these if you want to refine your search results - you can set them up before you enter your question, or apply after the results are produced:

- When the paper was published
- If there is open (free) access for the paper
- The type of study methodology used (primary studies like RCT or observational studies; other reviews, etc.)
- Population studied (human, animal)
- + more



Analyze and understand a paper

You can upload one (or more) paper to Consensus and ask it to describe it to you in plain language so you can understand it better.

Use the + sign in the search box to prompt the upload. This feature DOES require that you register an account with an email address, but it does not cost anything to do this.

Prompt examples (after you upload a PDF of the paper):

- *"explain the basis, methods, analysis, and results of this study to me in plain language terms like I am in high school"*
- *"Create a chart of the study characteristics [and/or results] of the research presented in these papers, include population, size, research method [and any other parts you want]"*

Check out the [Consensus Help page](#) for more best-practices for searching.