

*Based on: Users' Criteria to Evidence-Based Medicine  
GH Guyatt, DL Sackett and DJ Cook  
1995, American Medical Association*

## ***Using Systematic Reviews, Meta-Analyses or Review articles***

### **I. Are the results of the study valid?**

- Primary Criteria\*:
  - Did the overview address a focused clinical question?
  - Were the criteria used to select articles for inclusion appropriate?
- Secondary Criteria\*\*:
  - Is it unlikely that important, relevant studies were missed?
  - Was the validity of the included studies appraised?
  - Were assessments of studies reproducible?
  - Were the results similar from study to study?

### **II. What are the results?**

- What are the overall results of the review?
- How precise were the results?

### **III. Will the results help me in caring for my patients?**

- Can the results be applied to my patient care?
- Were all clinically important outcomes considered?
- Are the benefits worth the harms and costs?

\* Primary Criteria are meant to be applied quickly, by readers with limited time.

\*\* Secondary Criteria, while still important, can be reserved for articles that pass the initial criteria and for readers who have both the need and time for a deeper review.

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## ***Using articles of Therapy or Prevention***

### **I. Are the results of the study valid?**

- Primary Criteria\*:
  - Was the assignment of patients to treatments randomized?
  - Were all patients who entered the trial properly accounted for and attributed at its conclusion?
  - Were patients analyzed in the groups to which they were randomized?
- Secondary Criteria\*\*:
  - Were patients, health workers and study personnel “blind” to treatment?
  - Were the groups similar at the start of the trial?
  - Aside from the experimental intervention, were the groups treated equally?

### **II. What were the results?**

- How large was the treatment effect?
- How precise was the estimate of the treatment effect?

### **III. Will the results help me in caring for my patients?**

- Can the results be applied to my patient care?
- Were all clinically important outcomes considered?
- Are the likely treatment benefits worth the potential harms and costs?

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## ***Using articles of Diagnosis***

### **I. Are the results valid?**

- Primary Criteria\*:
  - Was there an independent, blind comparison with a reference standard?
  - Did the patient sample include an appropriate spectrum of patients to whom the diagnostic test will be applied in clinical practice?
- Secondary Criteria\*\*:
  - Did the results of the test being evaluated influence the decision to perform the reference standard?
  - Were the methods for performing the test described in sufficient detail to permit replication?

### **II. What are the results?**

- Are likelihood ratios for the test results presented or data necessary for their calculation provided?

### **III. How can I apply the results to my patient care?**

- Will the reproducibility of the test result and its interpretation be satisfactory in my setting?
- Are the results applicable to my patient?
- Will the results change my management?
- Will patients be better off as a result of the test?
- Are the likely benefits worth the potential harms and costs?

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## ***Using articles of Prognosis***

### **I. Are the results in the study valid?**

- Primary Criteria\*:
  - Was there a representative and well-defined sample of patients at a similar point in the course of the disease?
  - Was follow-up sufficiently long and complete?
- Secondary Criteria\*\*:
  - Were objective and unbiased outcome criteria used?
  - Was there adjustment for important prognostic factors?

### **II. What are the results?**

- How large is the likelihood of the outcome event(s) in a specified period of time?
- How precise are the estimates of likelihood?

### **III. Will the results help me in caring for my patients?**

- Were the study patients similar to my own?
- Will the results lead directly to selecting or avoiding therapy?
- Are the results useful for reassuring or counseling patients?

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## ***Using articles of Etiology or Harm***

### **I. Are the results of the study valid?**

- Primary Criteria\*:
  - Were there clearly identified comparison groups that were similar with respect to important determinants of outcome, other than the one of interest?
  - Were the outcomes and exposures measured in the same way in the groups being compared?
  - Was follow-up sufficiently long and complete?
- Secondary Criteria\*\*:
  - Is the temporal relationship correct?
  - Is there a dose response gradient?

### **II. What are the results?**

- How strong is the association between exposure and outcome?
- How precise is the estimate of the risk?

### **III. Will the results help me in caring for my patients?**

- Are the results applicable to my practice?
- What is the magnitude of the risk?
- Should I attempt to stop the exposure?

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