

## Evidence Literacy Outline

### INTRODUCTORY:

#### **Overview: Virtual Learning Community**

The "Health Evidence Literacy" learning units can help you learn to find, appraise and use evidence appearing in the health sciences literature. Critical appraisal is explored within an "Practice-Based Evidence" conceptual framework where the focus is on whether and how evidence should change health policy and practices.

This contains an updated Video component.

#### **Practice-Based Evidence**

The "Health Evidence Literacy" learning units can help you learn to find, appraise and use evidence appearing in the health sciences literature. Critical appraisal is explored within an "Practice-Based Evidence" conceptual framework where the focus is on whether and how evidence should change health policy and practices.

This merges what used to be 2 separate units: *Evidence Based Practice and Policy* and *Evidence Information Cycle*.

This contains an updated Video component.

#### **Assessing Health Problems**

This module explores the Evidence-Based Practice information cycle and its first step where we assess a health problem to discern important issues and anticipate evidence that could resolve uncertainties.

This contains an updated Video component.

#### **Asking Questions**

This module explores the second step of the Practice-Based Evidence information cycle. We consider how to express a health issue in a way that facilitates better communication and information gathering. Well-structured questions include details about the patient or population of interest, the health problem or concern, a specific health intervention, what it is being compared to and what outcomes will be used to judge whether the intervention is worthwhile.

This contains an updated Video component.

#### **Acquiring Evidence**

Given a well-built question, this module examines the types of information resources best suited to background and foreground evidence and some basic strategies for seeking best evidence from internet, full-text and indexed databases.

This contains an updated Video component.

## INTERMEDIATE:

### **Appraising Therapy**

In deciding whether to implement a health care intervention, decision-makers must balance anticipated benefits and harms. Different challenges confront investigators who study relatively common, wanted, outcomes versus uncommon, unwanted, outcomes. Evaluating their research requires attention to different sources of bias. Consequently, there are distinct approaches to judging the validity, importance and applicability for studies of the benefits and harms of health interventions. This module addresses reports about benefits of therapies.

This contains an updated Video component.

### **Practice Guidelines**

Health care practice may be reformed through attempts to change decisions made by patients, practitioners or policy makers. When done systematically, policies balance benefits and risks, gains and losses, and promote a specific course of action. Such are practice guidelines. This module explores the process of developing recommendations, suggests how the process may be conducted systematically, and introduces the methods and rationale for appraising practice guidelines.

This contains an updated Video component.

### **Appraising Causation and Harm**

Both professional journals and non-professional publications contain numerous claims regarding causation of health problems and as many as 5% of hospital admissions relate to harms from health interventions. In this module we examine literature that purports to show the cause of a health condition or ascribe an unwanted outcome to a health intervention. Questions about Causation and Harm are subject to similar sources of bias and can be considered together.

### **Appraising Outcomes Research**

There is increasing interest in evaluating the quality of health services, fueled in part by concern with costs and by dramatic interregional or international differences in practice patterns and outcomes. Investigators have increasingly looked to large administrative databases to compare the outcomes of care associated with different procedures, practices, or institutions.

### **Appraising Systematic Reviews**

The large volume of health care research often makes it impractical to consider all primary studies on a given topic, making reviews of primary research potentially useful. In this module, we explore the basic process of producing a systematic review and expose possible sources of bias.