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Meta-Analysis

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META-ANALYSIS

The 1989 amendments to the Public Health Service Act called for the National Library of Medicine (NLM) and the Agency for Health Care Policy and Research (AHCPR) to work together to develop and enhance information services in health services research. In response to this mandate, NLM established its Health Services Research Information Program. NLM's highest priorities for this program are to 1) enhance NLM's basic collection development, organization, and dissemination services to provide better coverage of the results of health services research, and 2) promote the use of these services by the health services research community. One area specifically targeted in this program is the development and dissemination of information on techniques and methodologies useful for health services research, such as meta-analysis.

The National Library of Medicine defines meta-analysis as "a quantitative method of combining the results of independent studies (usually drawn from the published literature) and synthesizing summaries and conclusions which may be used to evaluate therapeutic effectiveness, plan new studies, etc. It is often an overview of clinical trials." Interest in medical applications of meta-analysis has increased significantly in recent years, although meta-analytic procedures have been widely employed in the social sciences since the early 1970s. Meta-analysis is being used to draw conclusions from results collected from literature or narrative reviews and data pooled from independent studies, often clinical trials. It is a systematic method that uses statistical analysis for extracting, comparing, and combining results from independent studies to get quantifiable outcomes. Meta-analysis also can help to identify gaps in knowledge found in the published literature and thus can help provide guidance for future research.

This bibliography includes selected references from many disciplines. References are to works describing the methodology of meta-analysis including coding studies, data analytic methods, differences between results of competing models for meta-analysis, searching the literature, and publication bias. The selected references generally reflect the literature published since 1980 in journals, reports, books, book chapters, academic theses and dissertations, proceedings of meetings, guides, bibliographies and conference papers. A few selected references published before 1980 have been included because of their significance in the evolution of meta-analysis. Meta-analyses which are substantive and do not provide information about the methodology are excluded. Foreign-language works are included although most publications are in English. The bibliography is arranged in eight sections. The first section includes books and reports while the second has general references on meta-analysis and related methodologies. The remaining sections are arranged in specific subject categories; references appear in only one section.

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Journal Article:

Authors *Article Title*

Gerbarg ZB, Horwitz RI. Resolving conflicting clinical trials: guidelines for meta-analysis. J Clin Epidemiol 1988;41(5):503-9.

Abbreviated Journal Title *Date* *Volume* *Issue* *Pages*

Monograph:

Authors/Editors *Title*

Hedges LV, Olkin I. Statistical methods for meta-analysis. New York: Academic Press; 1985. 360p.

Place of Publication *Publisher* *Date* *Total No. of Pages*

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*For details of the formats used for references, *see* the following publication:

Patrias, Karen. *National Library of Medicine recommended formats for bibliographic citation.* Bethesda (MD): The Library; 1991 Apr. Available from: NTIS, Springfield, VA; PB91-182030.

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