



# Evaluation of technologies & modes of intervention

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# A brief journey through ...

- What SCIE does
- Why prefer systematic reviews to evaluations?
- Systematic review methods
- Issues & problems in systematic reviews

# What Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) does

The Social Care Institute for Excellence is a centrally placed knowledge brokerage organization *which “improves the lives of people who use care services by sharing knowledge about what works.... We gather and analyse knowledge about what works and translate that knowledge into practical resources, learning materials and services.”*

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# How do we do this?

- Consult with social care sector, government bodies, co-production network to identify research topics & questions
- We draw on 5 types of knowledge:
  - Research
  - User & carer knowledge & experience
  - Knowledge from practice
  - Organisational knowledge
  - Policy and legislation
- We use transparently reported systematic review processes to identify, analyse & synthesise the 'best' evidence which is most relevant & most reliable

# Why prefer systematic review to an evaluation?

- SCIE hasn't resources for primary research
- One evaluation is not enough for guidance
- Aggregate findings more likely to be reliable and generalisable
- Several questions on a topic can be addressed by including studies with different methodologies: cost-effectiveness of interventions (quantitative studies); views of users, families, providers (qualitative studies)
- We can supplement international evidence in our review with a local Practice Enquiry

# What are systematic review processes?

- Scoping or mapping the topic
- Convening stakeholder advisory group
- Drawing up research questions; considering what study designs will answer questions
- Search strategy to find all the relevant evidence
- Inclusion criteria – screening search outputs
- Appraising methodology of each study for bias
- Data extraction into tables
- Summarising and synthesising (quantitative or narrative)
- ‘Translation’ into suitable formats for target audience
- Dissemination

# What makes a review systematic?

From Petticrew (2001) Systematic reviews, BMJ, 322, 98-101

## Systematic reviews

Review question(s) stated

Searches aim to find everything relevant

Explicit inclusion/exclusion criteria

Quality of research methods is assessed for bias

Synthesis of sound studies only

## Traditional reviews

Review question(s) may not be clear

Don't include everything

Inclusion criteria may not be formalised

Quality of research methodology not assessed

May include studies of varying quality & reliability

# Some challenges in systematic reviews in social work & social care

- Not enough good quality research.
- Randomisation unethical or unpopular?
- Lot of disciplined work: policy makers want shortcuts, rapid reviews.
- Who we target with findings, and what formats we use.
- Uncertain impact of reviews.

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