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Systematic Reviews

Systematic (structured) reviews are preferable to the narrative reviews generally published in medical journals. Systematic reviews define a clear and clinically relevant research question, retrieve previously published reviews, document their limitations, and justify the need for a more comprehensive review. They then define the search strategy used to identify primary articles and the criteria used to select the most valid of these for review. Authors of well done systematic reviews look for unpublished, as well as published studies. A systematic review specifies the method of combining data from different studies, discusses variation within and between studies, and presents specific conclusions, contrasting these with existing literature and standards of care. Authors of systematic reviews should identify the limitations of the review and suggest areas for future research. *CJEM's* guidelines for systematic review articles are presented on page 141 of this issue. *Evidence-Based Medicine*, *ACP Journal Club*, and *The Cochrane Library* are excellent sources of systematic reviews on a broad range of topics, many relevant to emergency medicine.

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