

- 1a:** Systematic reviews (with homogeneity) of randomized controlled trials
- 1a-:** Systematic review of randomized trials displaying worrisome heterogeneity
- 1b:** Individual randomized controlled trials (with narrow confidence interval)
- 1b-:** Individual randomized controlled trials (with a wide confidence interval)
- 1c:** All or none randomized controlled trials
- 2a:** Systematic reviews (with homogeneity) of cohort studies
- 2a-:** Systematic reviews of cohort studies displaying worrisome heterogeneity
- 2b:** Individual cohort study or low quality randomized controlled trials (<80% follow-up)
- 2b-:** Individual cohort study or low quality randomized controlled trials (<80% follow-up / wide confidence interval)
- 2c:** 'Outcomes' Research; ecological studies
- 3a:** Systematic review (with homogeneity) of case-control studies
- 3a-:** Systematic review of case-control studies with worrisome heterogeneity
- 3b:** Individual case-control study
- 4:** Case-series (and poor quality cohort and case-control studies)
- 5:** Expert opinion without explicit critical appraisal, or based on physiology, bench research or 'first principles'

1= randomized controlled trials

2= cohort studies or low-quality randomized trials

3=case-control studies

4=case series and poor quality cohort and case-control studies

5=expert option without explicit critical appraisal or based on physiology or first principles

1,2,3 a= systematic review with homogeneity

a-=systemic review with heterogeneity

b= individual studies with homogeneity

b-= individual studies with heterogeneity