Updated critical appraisal tools for JBI systematic reviews of textual evidence: Narrative, expert opinion and policy

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▶ BACKGROUND

- When a particular problem or question is only answered through the perspectives of clinical experience or the consensus of experts (either clinicians or consumers), this evidence becomes vital to practitioners and policy makers and represents the best available evidence to guide their decision-making. This type of evidence can be used to complement empirical evidence or, in the absence of formal research studies, may stand alone as the best available evidence.
- Three related, but distinctive, sources of textual evidence exist: narrative, expert opinion, and policy. It is essential to acknowledge the unique nature of these sources, particularly in relation to critical appraisal.

▶ OBJECTIVE

The JBI Textual Evidence methodology group has updated the JBI critical appraisal tool for textual evidence, according to three related, but distinctive textual sources (narrative, expert opinion, or policy).

▶ RESULTS

Narrative refers to first-hand accounts of experience, perspective or views of consumers, health professionals or other stakeholders.

JBI Critical Appraisal Checklist: Narrative Evidence
1. Is the generator of the narrative a credible or appropriate source?
2. Is the relationship between the text and its context explained? (where, when, who with, how)
3. Does the narrative present the events using a logical sequence so the reader or listener can understand how it unfolds?
4. Do you, as reader of the narrative, arrive at similar conclusions to those drawn by the narrator?
5. Do the conclusions flow from the narrative account?
6. Do you consider this account to be a narrative?

JBI Critical Appraisal Checklist: Expert Opinion Evidence
1. Is the source of the opinion clearly identified?
2. Does the source of the opinion have standing in the field of expertise?
3. Are the interests of the relevant population the central focus of the opinion?
4. Does the opinion demonstrate a logically defended argument to support the conclusions drawn?
5. Is there reference to the extant literature?
6. Is any incongruence with the literature/sources logically defended?

Expert opinion draws on the knowledge and experience of experts (both clinicians and consumers) and frequently, extant external evidence informs the opinion.

Policy refers to a deliberate set of principles designed to guide decisions and achieve rational outcomes.

JBI Critical Appraisal Checklist: Policy Evidence
1. Are the developers of the policy (and any allegiances/affiliations) clearly identified?
2. Do the developers of the policy have standing in the field of expertise?
3. Are appropriate stakeholders involved in developing the policy and do the conclusions drawn represent the views of their intended users?
4. Are biases due to competing interests acknowledged and responded to?
5. Are the processes of gathering and summarizing the evidence described?
6. Is any incongruence with the extant literature/evidence logically defended?
7. Are the methods used to develop recommendations described?

Reporting: There should be a narrative summary of the overall quality of the included texts, which can be supported by a table showing the overall results of the quality assessment. This should be presented separately for each type of textual evidence.

Critical appraisal tools