

A method for critical appraisal and evaluation of clinical decision support databases for the practice of evidence-based medicine.

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There are several clinical decision support databases for the practice of evidence-based medicine, like Clinical Evidence, Up to Date, Dynamed and eMedicine. Do all of these databases offer the best available, current, valid and relevant evidence for practice of evidence-based medicine, and do they support the five-step model for practicing evidence-based clinical medicine.

The evaluation of different databases can be done by comparing the conclusions and advice given, and by evaluating the methods used to produce the articles, with explicit and systematic rules for evidence-based clinical practice.

Is there a clear description of how the producers select and produce the contents in the databases? How is the information produced and how is the quality of the information they use judged?

By using critical appraisal worksheets for systematic reviews, and questioning if the producers of the databases do use similar methods in their production of their articles, can we judge how they work after explicit and systematic rules of evidence-based practice? Do they use active critical appraisal and evaluation, based on evidence-based principles of the information they produce, or do they present information made by other than evidence-based principles. Both the method of how the databases are made and the content in the database will be judged.

By comparing the answers to the similar question for all the different databases, can we judge the methodological quality of their contents, and discover differences in how they select their content, and how they work to secure the quality of the content.