Do Librarians Make Better Systematic Reviews?
Methods and Development of a Custom Quality Assessment Rubric

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Background & Research Questions

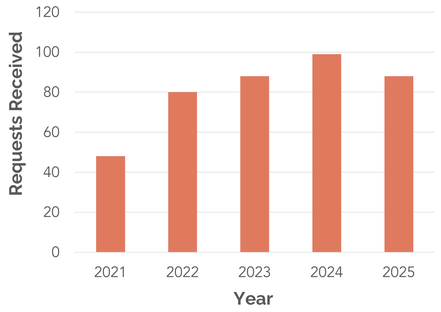
Systematic Review Services at Galter Library

Support Models

Consultation
- Librarian guidance and training for project planning
- One-hour consultation and/or structured search strategy review (PRESS)

Collaboration
- Ongoing librarian involvement throughout SR process
- Key contributions include:
  - Protocol development
  - Search strategy design and execution
  - Manuscript preparation

Trends in Systematic Review Support Requests



Research Question

Does support from a Galter librarian influence the quality of systematic reviews published by Feinberg School of Medicine authors?

Methods

Design: Matched case–control study

Population: Systematic reviews published between 2022–2025 by Feinberg School of Medicine (FSM) authors

Study Groups:
- Case: Librarian collaboration
- Case: Librarian consultation
- Control: No librarian involvement

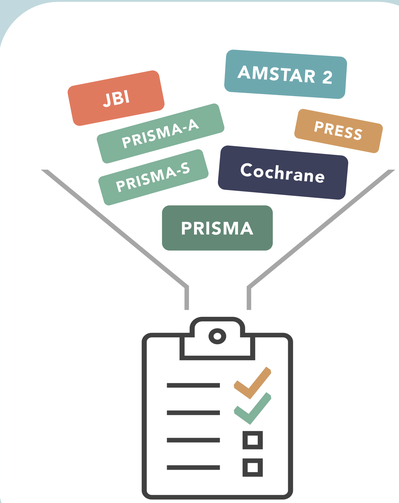
Critical Appraisal Tool:
- Custom, non-validated rubric
  - Informed by established evidence synthesis standards and reporting guidelines.
  - Two rounds of pilot testing and revisions.

Challenges & Early Findings

- Small sample size for consultation case group (n=6): library consults have resulted in few published SRs meeting study criteria
- Unable to use AMSTAR 2 for critical appraisal as intended, as not broadly applicable to all systematic reviews
- Development of custom rubric was lengthy and time-intensive process
- Rubric development & pilot testing revealed:
  - Knowledge gaps
  - Differences in librarian methods/interpretation
  - Areas for improvement in systematic review instruction and support

Next Steps

- Complete data collection
- Conduct quantitative analysis: ANOVA of rubric-based quality scores, with primary analysis on core prompts and subset analysis on search-related prompts



A Custom Rubric to Assess Systematic Review Quality

Core Rubric
19 prompts
Evaluation of overall SR quality, including essential search methods and reporting

Supplement
5 prompts
Expanded assessment of search methods and reporting

Prompt Response	Score
Yes	2
Partial	1
No or unable to determine	0

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