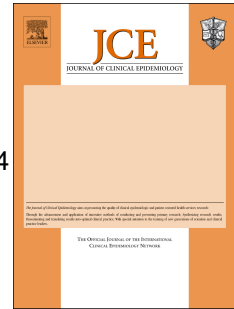


Accepted Manuscript

Identifying quasi-experimental (QE) studies to inform systematic reviews Dec 20 2014

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PII: S0895-4356(17)30301-3

DOI: [10.1016/j.jclinepi.2017.02.018](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclinepi.2017.02.018)

Reference: JCE 9359

To appear in: *Journal of Clinical Epidemiology*

Received Date: 1 April 2014

Revised Date: 11 October 2016

Accepted Date: 23 February 2017

Please cite this article as: Glanville J, Eyers J, Jones AM, Shemilt I, Wang G, Johansen M, Fiander M, Rothstein H, Identifying quasi-experimental (QE) studies to inform systematic reviews Dec 20 2014, *Journal of Clinical Epidemiology* (2017), doi: 10.1016/j.jclinepi.2017.02.018.

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Quasi-experimental study designs series – Paper 8:

Identifying quasi-experimental studies to inform systematic reviews

Article Type: Invited Paper

Keywords: Quasi-experimental studies; databases; information retrieval; systematic reviews

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Abstract: Objective

This paper reviews the available evidence and guidance on methods to identify reports of quasi-experimental (QE) studies to inform systematic reviews of health care, public health, international development, education, crime and justice, and social welfare.

Study Design and Setting

Research, guidance and examples of search strategies were identified by searching a range of databases, key guidance documents, selected reviews, conference proceedings and personal communication. Current practice and research evidence were summarised.

Results

4914 records were retrieved by database searches and additional documents were obtained by other searches. QE studies are challenging to identify efficiently because they have no standardized nomenclature and may be indexed in various ways. Reliable search filters are not available. There is a lack of specific resources devoted to collecting QE studies and little evidence on where best to search.

Conclusion

Searches to identify QE studies should search a range of resources and, until indexing improves, use strategies that focus on the topic rather than the study design. Better definitions, better indexing in databases, prospective registers and reporting guidance are required to improve the retrieval of QE studies and to promote SRs of what works based on the evidence from such studies.

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