

A synthesis that collates all empirical evidence fitting pre-specified eligibility criteria in order to answer a specific research question.

**Note 1:** Systematic reviews are conducted according to a pre-specified protocol. The methods used are selected with a view to minimizing bias, thus providing more reliable findings from which conclusions can be drawn and decisions made.

**Note 2:** Many systematic reviews contain meta-analyses. A **meta-analysis** is the use of statistical methods to summarize the results of independent studies.