



### Key Points:

- Evidence synthesis is best done through group discussion. All team members share their perspectives, and the team uses critical thinking to arrive at a judgment based on consensus during the synthesis process. The synthesis process involves both subjective and objective reasoning by the full EBP team. Through reasoning, the team:
  - Reviews the quality appraisal of the individual pieces of evidence
  - Assesses and assimilates consistencies in findings
  - Evaluates the meaning and relevance of the findings
  - Merges findings that may either enhance the team's knowledge or generate new insights, perspectives, and understandings
  - Highlights inconsistencies in findings
  - Makes recommendations based on the synthesis process.
- When evidence includes multiple studies of Level I and Level II evidence, there is a similar population or setting of interest, and there is consistency across findings, EBP teams can have greater confidence in recommending a practice change. However, with a majority of Level II and Level III evidence, the team should proceed cautiously in making practice changes. In this instance, recommendation(s) typically include completing a pilot before deciding to implement a full-scale change.
- Generally, practice changes are not made on Level IV or Level V evidence alone. Nonetheless, teams have a variety of options for actions that include, but are not limited to: creating awareness campaigns, conducting informational and educational

updates, monitoring evidence sources for new information, and designing research studies.

- The quality rating (see Appendix D) is used to appraise both individual quality of evidence and overall quality of evidence.

## EBP Question:

Category (Level Type)	Total Number of Sources/ Level	Overall Quality Rating	Synthesis of Findings Evidence That Answers the EBP Question
<p><b><u>Level I</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Experimental study</li> <li>▪ Randomized controlled trial (RCT)</li> <li>▪ Systematic review of RCTs with or without meta-analysis</li> <li>▪ Explanatory mixed method design that includes only a Level I quantitative study</li> </ul>			
<p><b><u>Level II</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Quasi-experimental studies</li> <li>▪ Systematic review of a combination of RCTs and quasi-experimental studies, or quasi-experimental studies only, with or without meta-analysis</li> <li>▪ Explanatory mixed method design that includes only a Level II quantitative study</li> </ul>			
<p><b><u>Level III</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Nonexperimental study</li> <li>▪ Systematic review of a combination of RCTs, quasi-experimental and nonexperimental studies, or nonexperimental studies only, with or without meta-analysis</li> <li>▪ Qualitative study or meta-synthesis</li> </ul>			

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Exploratory, convergent, or multiphasic mixed-methods studies</li> <li>▪ Explanatory mixed method design that includes only a level III Quantitative study</li> </ul>			
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Category (Level Type)	Total Number of Sources/ Level	Overall Quality Rating	Synthesis of Findings Evidence That Answers the EBP Question
<p><b><u>Level IV</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Opinions of respected authorities and/or reports of nationally recognized expert committees or consensus panels based on scientific evidence</li> </ul>			
<p><b><u>Level V</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Evidence obtained from literature or integrative reviews, quality improvement, program evaluation, financial evaluation, or casereports</li> <li>▪ Opinion of nationally recognized expert(s) based on experiential evidence</li> </ul>			

Based on your synthesis, which of the following four pathways to translation represents the overall strength of the evidence?

- Strong, compelling evidence, consistent results: Solid indication for a practice change is indicated.
- Good and consistent evidence: Consider pilot of change or further investigation.
- Good but conflicting evidence: No indication for practice change; consider further investigation for new evidence or develop a research study.
- Little or no evidence: No indication for practice change; consider further investigation for new evidence, develop a research study, or discontinue project.

If you selected either the first option or the second option, continue. If not, *STOP*—translation is not indicated.

## Recommendations based on evidence synthesis and selected translation pathway

### Consider the following as you examine *fit*:

Are the recommendations:

- Compatible with the unit/departmental/organizational cultural values or norms?
- Consistent with unit/departmental/organizational assumptions, structures, attitudes, beliefs, and/or practices?
- Consistent with the unit/departmental/organizational priorities?

### Consider the following questions as you examine *feasibility*:

- Can we do what they did in our work environment?
- Are the following supports available?
  - Resources
  - Funding
  - Approval from administration and clinical leaders
  - Stakeholder support
- Is it likely that the recommendations can be implemented within the unit/department/ organization?

## **Directions for Use of This Form**

### **Purpose of form**

Use this form to compile the results of the individual evidence appraisal to answer the EBP question. The pertinent findings for each level of evidence are synthesized, and a quality rating is assigned to each level.

### **Total number of sources per level**

Record the number of sources of evidence for each level.

### **Overall quality rating**

Summarize the overall quality of evidence for each level. Use Appendix D to rate the quality of evidence.

### **Synthesis of findings: evidence that answers the EBP question**

- Include only findings from evidence of A or B quality.
- Include only statements that directly answer the EBP question.
- Summarize findings within each level of evidence.
- Record article number(s) from individual evidence summary in parentheses next to each statement so that the source of the finding is easy to identify.

### **Develop recommendations based on evidence synthesis and the selected translation pathway**

Review the synthesis of findings and determine which of the following four pathways to translation represents the overall strength of the evidence:

- Strong, compelling evidence, consistent results: Solid indication for a practice change is indicated.
- Good and consistent evidence: Consider pilot of change or further investigation.

- Good but conflicting evidence: No indication for practice change; consider further investigation for new evidence or develop a research study.
- Little or no evidence: No indication for practice change; consider further investigation for new evidence, develop a research study, or discontinue the project.

### Fit and feasibility

Even when evidence is strong and of high quality, it may not be appropriate to implement a change in practice. It is crucial to examine feasibility that considers the resources available, the readiness for change, and the balance between risk and benefit. *Fit* refers to the compatibility of the proposed change with the organization's mission, goals, objectives, and priorities. A change that does not fit within the organizational priorities will be less likely to receive leadership and financial support, making success difficult. Implementing processes with a low likelihood of success wastes valuable time and resources on efforts that produce negligible benefits.