HSCI 1130: PICO Worksheet

PICO questions and components

The PICO model helps you to develop a specific, answerable research question about a clinical health topic. The health/medical literature can then be searched for evidence to answer the PICO question.

A PICO question includes the following components:

- **P** - Patient population
  Describes a group of patients who have factors in common such as age group, gender, ethnicity, having a disease or condition.
  *Example:* overweight adult with hypertension

- **I** - Intervention or issue of interest
  Describes the intervention you are considering, such as a treatment or diagnostic test.
  *Example:* diet and exercise changes

- **C** - Comparison (a comparison is not always needed)
  If appropriate, identifies the main alternative treatment for comparison.
  *Example:* no change in diet or exercise

- **O** - Outcome
  Describes the desired effect or outcome for the patient.
  *Example:* reduction in blood pressure

**Resulting PICO question:**
In overweight adults with hypertension (P), does changing diet and exercise (I) result in reduced blood pressure (O)?

Types of PICO questions

The 2 most common types of PICO questions are:

- Intervetion question: what treatment has the best outcome?
  *e.g.* In healthy older people (P), does the use of vitamin B12 supplements (I) improve cognitive function (O)?

- Etiology question: what are greatest risk factors or causes?
  *e.g.* Are pregnant women (P) who have a drug addiction (I) at greater risk for postpartum depression (O)?
PICO search planning worksheet

Step 1:
Please choose one of the PICO questions below to complete your Matrix Assignment. Circle the letter of the PICO question you have chosen:

A. In adults ages 65 and older (P), how does the use of an influenza vaccine (I) affect the likelihood of developing pneumonia (O)?

B. In sex workers (P), how do community empowerment interventions (I) affect HIV transmission rates (O)?

Step 2:
What type of PICO question is your question? Tick the appropriate box.

☑ Intervention question
☑ Etiology question

Step 3:
Write down the three main concepts in your PICO question. Next, write down any synonyms or alternate terms for each concept.

Concept #1 ___________________  Synonyms? ____________________________
Concept #2 ___________________  Synonyms? ____________________________
Concept #3 ___________________  Synonyms? ____________________________