

Evidence-Based Information Special Interest Group: year report 2024

Jane Falconer (a), Thomas Vandendriessche (b), Shona Kirtley (c), Krizia Tuand (d), Maria Björklund (e), Marshal Dozier (f), Andra Fry (g), Mark Mueller (h) and Nele S. Pauwels (i)

(a) Library, Archive & Open Research Services, London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, London, UK jane.falconer@lshtm.ac.uk (corresponding author)

(b) KU Leuven Libraries - 2Bergen, Leuven, Belgium

(c) UK EQUATOR Centre, Centre for Statistics in Medicine, Nuffield Department of Orthopaedics, Rheumatology & Musculoskeletal Sciences, University of Oxford, Oxford, UK

(d) KU Leuven Libraries - 2Bergen - Learning Centre Désiré Collen, Leuven, Belgium

(e) Library & ICT, Faculty of Medicine, Lund University, Lund, Sweden

(f) Library, University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh, UK

(g) LSE Library, London School of Economics and Political Science, London, UK

(h) Clinical Librarian, Saskatchewan Health Authority, Canada

(i) Knowledge Centre for Health Ghent, Ghent University, Ghent University Hospital, Ghent, Belgium

Introduction

2024 has been another busy year for the Evidence-Based Information Special Interest Group (EBI-SIG). We had our annual meeting at the 2024 EAHIL Conference in Riga where we presented results from many of our projects. Since our last update in *JEAHIL*, we also ran two journal club meetings and two webinars. This report provides details of these activities.

EBI-SIG meeting, 30 May 2024 at the 2024 EAHIL Conference, Riga (held online via Zoom)

Approximately 25 EBI-SIG members attended our annual meeting. After an update from the committee, each project team provided an update on their project, inviting questions from attendees. Meeting minutes and copies of the project presentations are available in the EBI-SIG Google Drive folder (1).

Updates from EBI-SIG projects

Project 1: Mapping journal requirements for systematic reviews

The initial project was successfully concluded and published in the *Cochrane Evidence Synthesis and Methods* journal (2). The evidence and insights collected during this project will be used in a subsequent implementation project (project 8, below).

Project 2: Reference database on articles about systematic search methods

The Zotero reference library is regularly updated with papers related to systematic review methodology and the role of information specialists in systematic reviews. The journal club (focused on relevant papers from the Zotero library) is ongoing. Journal clubs were held in May 2024 and October 2024. Reports from each journal club are in the EBI-SIG Google Docs folder (1).

Additional suggestions for the Zotero reference library or journal club can be sent to Maria Björklund (maria.bjorklund@med.lu.se).

NEWS FROM EAHIL SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS

Project 4: Library of search-strategy resources

The team has made a number of changes to the Library of Search Strategy Resources (LSSR) website over the past year (3). These include reorganisation and added descriptions to the resources on the Tools and Guides pages, glossary pages of terms and definitions for Searching and Study/Review Types, and embedded instructional videos on how to use the LSSR.

Analysis of Google Analytics data show that the site has been used across the world by thousands of users within the past year (*Table 1*). The top three countries were the USA with 641 active users, Canada with 300 active users and the United Kingdom with 174 active users. The most popular pages were the LSSR Collections, LSSR Tools and the LSSR Study Types Glossary.

To continue to promote the site and increase usage the LSSR website was presented at the 2024 Creating Knowledge Conference in Helsinki, Finland and to the NHS Literature Searching Group in Wales.

Total number of active users	1732
Total number of countries users come from	66
Total number of new users	1570
Total number of engaged users	1931
Total number of users visiting from a direct link	1993

Table 1. Usage of the LSSR website for the 12 months prior to 21 October 2024. Data from Google Analytics.

Project 7: Tools in R for health libraries

Project 7 is now completed. In the last year, the bibliographic search for R-tools was extended to more multi-disciplinary databases, to see if these articles are more likely to be published in non-medical journal titles. We still found that grey literature sources were best for finding R-tools. Only 42% of relevant R-tools have an associated journal article and of these, only 56% were indexed in Medline.

Therefore, a multi-database, multi-disciplinary search is required if searching the academic literature for R-tools.

As of our last update search in June 2024, 69 R-tools were found which were relevant to steps in the evidence synthesis process which information professionals commonly contribute to. There are many tools which offer direct connections to databases such as PubMed, Google Scholar or Scopus and for study registries and pre-print servers. There are also a range of tools for particular search techniques such as forward and backward citation, or for constructing search strategies using textual analysis.

Project 8: Improving journal requirements for systematic reviews

This project is a follow-up to Project 1 where we evaluated the author guidelines of biomedical and health journals related to the conducting and reporting of systematic reviews, and we provided recommendations for improvements of author guidelines based on the findings.

In this current project, we aim to build on those findings by actively disseminating our research and implementing the recommendations from Project 1. Our ultimate goal is to help enhance the quality of systematic reviews being published. An author instruction template for systematic reviews was developed, incorporating feedback from information specialists in Spring 2024. From this template, a concise and comprehensive section was created to facilitate implementation. Over the summer, all material was distributed to the journals and publishers included in our original analysis, and the preliminary results were presented at the Global Evidence Summit in September. A final reminder email was sent in October, and the next phase will focus on monitoring journal compliance and reporting the outcomes. All documentation and results are publicly available (4).

Journal clubs

Two journal clubs have been held in 2024, one in May and one in October. Reports of each journal club are available as soon as possible after each meeting and published on the EBI-SIG Google drive (1).

Webinars

PRESS: Overview and update. Webinar, 4 December 2023

We were happy to welcome Danielle Rabb, Caitlyn Ford and Robin Featherstone from Research Information Services, CADTH, to lead a webinar on PRESS Guideline. Over 50 people joined our webinar which started with a review of PRESS and the future plans for PRESS. This was followed by a Q&A. Thank you to Danielle, Caitlyn and Robin for leading the session and sharing their knowledge, and to those who attended for their questions and comments. The slides from this webinar are available on the EBI-SIG Google Drive (1).

AI tools and their use for systematic searching/systematic reviews. Workshop, 23 September 2024

We were delighted to have Julie Glanville join us to facilitate a webinar on the use of AI tools in systematic searching and systematic reviews. During this webinar, Julie demonstrated a selection of AI tools such as Gen-spark, Consensus, SciSpace, Elicit, and others that can be used to assist with systematic searching/systematic reviews. This was followed by a discussion where participants shared tools that they also found useful. In addition, the values and changes of the use of AI for systematic searching were discussed. Julie kindly produced a webpage with links to the different tools as well as literature recommended during the workshop (5). She also raised awareness for the newly developed Responsible AI in Evidence SynthEsis (RAISE) guidelines, plus a survey to collect feedback (6). The webinar was extremely interesting and highly popular. At its peak, 253 colleagues joined from around the world. We would like to thank Julie for sharing her knowledge on this fascinating topic and to attendees for contributing to the discussion.

Conclusion

2024 has been another fruitful year for the EBI-SIG. As well as our usual meetings, our projects are producing tangible and popular outputs. We would like to extend a large thank you to all of our project volunteers who have contributed their time and expertise to our projects. The EBI-SIG organisers are currently assessing potential new projects, to be started as existing projects are completed. We encourage EBI-SIG members to also keep a look out for updates on journal clubs and webinars taking place in 2025.

Acknowledgements

We would like to acknowledge the EBI-SIG project volunteers for their work on the projects this year. A list of all project teams is available on the EBI-SIG website (1).

References

1. EAHIL SIG for evidence-based information [Internet]. Shared Google Drive. [cited 2024 Nov 4]. Available from <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1uxWrkLU0fqDkYYPpIRReeFUaJ8luzGBzL>.
2. Pauwels NS, Koobasi M, Fry A, Vandendriessche T, Wittevrongel A, Ødegaard, M. Guidance for systematic reviews in journal author instructions: Findings and recommendations for editorial teams. *Cochrane Evid Synth Methods*. 2024;2(4):e12050. doi: 10.1002/cesm.12050.
3. Fry A, Mueller M, Gulhane L, Koobasi M, Kubker R, Pauwels N, Stojanovic V. Library of search strategy resources. 2024 [cited 2024 Nov 4]. Available from <https://sites.google.com/view/searchresourceslib/home>.
4. Ødegaard, M, Pauwels NS, Koobasi M, Fry A, Vandendriessche T, Wittevrongel A. Mapping journals' requirements for systematic review searches. [cited 2024 Nov 4]. Available from <https://osf.io/6ax4p/>.
5. Glanville, J. EAHIL Workshop. [cited 2024 Nov 4]. Available from <https://start.me/p/l6v6zK/eahil-workshop>.
6. Work with Cochrane to help ensure that AI is monitored and used effectively. 2024 September 11 [cited 2024 November 4]. In: *FutureCochrane* [Internet]. Available from: <https://futurecochrane.org/newnews/cochrane-and-ai-recent-developments-and-join-us-at-the-global-evidence-summit>.