



Title	Overview of Systematic Methodology Reviews of the Design and Conduct of Randomized Trials and Systematic Reviews of Healthcare Interventions
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Aim

To support Pragmatic Randomized Controlled Trials in HealthCare (Practihc) guidance for designing pragmatic randomized trials:

- to inform future revisions of the CONSORT guidelines for reporting randomized trials
- to inform guidelines for conducting and reporting systematic reviews
- to inform decisions about priorities for Cochrane methodology reviews.

Conclusions and results

Twenty-eight methodology reviews, covering 16 topics, were included. Thirty-one structured abstracts were prepared for the included reviews, and a commentary was written for each topic area.

Many decisions about the design and reporting of randomized trials and systematic reviews must be based on logical arguments – but often with uncertainty about what empirical evidence is available (due to the lack of a systematic methodology review), or uncertainty about the impact of alternative decisions (due to the lack of empirical evidence).

This uncertainty not only impacts on the use of resources for research, but it has important consequences for the availability of reliable evidence to inform decisions about health care.

Methods

Methodology reviews were compiled by searching the Cochrane Methodology Register, the Cochrane Database of Methodology Reviews, and UK NHS HTA Methodology Reviews. Two reviewers identified potentially relevant reviews. These were retrieved, and the same two reviewers assessed the relevance. A structured abstract and a commentary were prepared for each included methodology review.

Further research/reviews required

In general, relatively few systematic methodology reviews are available, and many of the included methodology reviews found a paucity of empirical evidence. There are many important methodological questions for which no systematic reviews were found.