Background Questions are questions that you need to ask to fill in your knowledge gaps about a clinical scenario. This could be a question about the description of a disease, how a particular therapy is performed, or the general ramifications of a condition on a patient's life.

**Correct**

What is Anaphylaxis?
Anaphylaxis is a sudden-onset, life-threatening event characterized by bronchospasm in conjunction with hemodynamic changes.
(Ferri’s Clinical Advisor via MD Consult)

When you write your background questions make sure you include:
- Your question
- Your answer
- Your source

PICO is the system that EBM uses to break down a clinical scenario into its essential components.

- **P** Patient or Problem: This is anything relevant that describes (i.e. age group, gender, comorbidity) the specific person, condition or disease.
- **I** Intervention: What do you want to do with this patient (i.e. treat, diagnose, observe, surgery)? Typically, this is the “gold standard.”
- **C** Comparison: What is the alternative to the intervention (i.e. placebo, different drug or therapy or surgery)? In some cases you will not have a comparison, and this can be omitted.
- **O** Outcome: What are the relevant outcomes (e.g. morbidity, death, complications)? Don’t forget to consider patient values/concerns in your outcome.

Your clinical question should be the logical result of your PICO. In general, it should take the following formula:

For/In a patient with **P**: **Patient/Problem** Is/Does **I**: **Intervention** Or **C**: **Comparison** Affect **O**: **Outcome**

For Example...

In an 80yr female patient with hypertension, are ACE inhibitors more effective than beta-blockers in controlling high blood pressure and minimizing adverse effects?

When starting your search try to start off with a small number of keywords or limits. If you receive too many results from your search, you can add more keywords or limits. If you are finding that the results you get are not exactly what you expected or want, consider revising your keywords, using MeSH terms, or using Boolean operators (i.e. AND, OR, NOT). Remember, searching is an art, not a science!
Not all studies are created alike, and you will see that some studies are better suited for different types of clinical questions (i.e. diagnosis, therapy, etc.). The chart below will help you find which study type is best suited for the type of clinical question you are asking.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Question</th>
<th>Suggested Best Type of Study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Therapy</td>
<td>RCT &gt; cohort &gt; case control &gt; case series</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diagnosis</td>
<td>Prospective, blind comparison to gold standard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Etiology / Harm</td>
<td>RCT &gt; cohort &gt; case control &gt; case series</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prognosis</td>
<td>Cohort study &gt; case control &gt; case series</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prevention</td>
<td>RCT &gt; cohort study &gt; case control &gt; case series</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clinical Exam</td>
<td>Prospective, blind comparison to gold standard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost</td>
<td>Economic analysis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Questions of therapy, etiology and prevention which can best be answered by RCT can also be answered by a meta-analysis or systematic review.

When citing your article, be sure to use a proper citation. This should include the necessary elements, such as author(s), article title, title of publication, etc. You can consult any of the various style manuals (APA, MLA, etc.) to learn how to format citations properly. You may also wish to consider using a citation management system, such as EndNote, RefWorks, Zotero or EasyBib to help you with citations.

We are here to help you!
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