

Preface

Systematic reviews represent a cornerstone of contemporary evidence-based practice, providing a rigorous and reproducible approach to the identification, appraisal, and synthesis of research findings. In an era characterized by the exponential growth of scientific publications, the systematic review offers a methodological framework to distill reliable evidence, reduce bias, and enhance the validity of conclusions that inform clinical practice, public health policy, and future research priorities.

The primary purpose of this book is to provide a comprehensive and structured overview of the principles and practices that underpin systematic reviewing. It is intended to serve as both an instructional resource and a reference text for a broad readership, including graduate students, early-career investigators, experienced researchers, and practitioners who engage with evidence synthesis in their respective fields.

The book is organized to guide the reader through the entire process of conducting a systematic review. Initial chapters address the conceptual foundations of systematic reviews, followed by detailed discussions of methodological components such as protocol development, question formulation, literature searching, study selection, critical appraisal, data extraction, synthesis methods, and reporting standards.

The contributors to this book bring extensive expertise and diverse perspectives, ensuring that the content is both methodologically rigorous and practically relevant. While the text seeks to establish best practices, it also acknowledges that systematic reviewing is a continually developing discipline, requiring adaptability, transparency, and critical reflection from those who practice it.

I hope that this work will provide readers not only with technical guidance but also with an appreciation of the broader epistemological and ethical considerations inherent in evidence synthesis. By advancing the capacity to conduct systematic reviews of high methodological quality, this book aspires to contribute to the integrity of research, the advancement of knowledge, and the improvement of outcomes for individuals and societies.

