
A Step-by-Step Guide to Conducting an Integrative Review

Coleen E. Toronto • Ruth Remington
Editors

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 Springer

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ISBN 978-3-030-37503-4

ISBN 978-3-030-37504-1 (eBook)

<https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-37504-1>

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The registered company address is: Gewerbestrasse 11, 6330 Cham, Switzerland

Foreword

In nursing, we rely on integrative and other types of reviews for evidence to guide practice and reveal gaps in our knowledge that suggest further studies to be done. Reviews are critical to answer our questions about practice and how to care for patients. To make these important decisions, however, we need rigorous reviews that carefully and systematically search the literature, appraise studies, and synthesize findings. Without a strong methodology, the value of a review is questionable. Very few nurses and other health care providers are prepared to conduct an integrative review. Compounding this lack of preparation and understanding is the variety of terms used for reviews. There is no consistency in our definitions of the different types of reviews.

The focus of this book is on integrative reviews. These reviews are particularly valuable to nursing because they answer questions we have about practice, which guide the review, and involve a comprehensive search of the literature. In contrast to some types of reviews, in an integrative review, the quality of each of the studies is evaluated, and individual studies are then interpreted and synthesized into some meaningful conclusions to answer the questions and share new knowledge about the topic. This is what we need in nursing.

This is a must-read book for any nurse who is involved in evidence-based practice. It should be a required text for graduate students in nursing who need to develop skills in conducting integrative reviews as a basis for their scholarly projects and research. As prelicensure students learn about reviews, the book would be valuable for them too because it leads readers through each step of a review in a clear manner with examples. To move forward in nursing and health care, we need to understand how to conduct rigorous integrative reviews. This book explains the process, beginning with formulating questions to guide the review through the dissemination of the findings. There are no other books that focus on integrative reviews and provide the reader with a step-by-step process to use. This book by Drs. Toronto and Remington is a valuable resource for nurses, other health care providers, and nursing students at all levels.

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Preface

The integrative review is a frequent capstone project for graduate students and the basis for many doctoral projects. As educators, we have taught graduate students to conduct integrative reviews using book chapters and articles that covered integrative review methodology. These resources were limited and/or outdated and did not provide clear and practical advice on how to complete each step in the integrative review process. Due to this lack of resources, we would direct our students to look to the literature for published integrative reviews to help guide them when conducting their reviews; however, many reviews did not follow a consistent format and instead confused our students. These educational experiences were the impetus for our need to explore, in depth, the characteristics of published nurse-led reviews. We conducted a review to gain a better understanding of what a well-done review should look like and help us guide our students. Our review findings confirmed what we had been witnessing in the classroom with our students. There was much variation on how this type of review is conducted and published. Reviews often missed essential systematic steps to ensure rigor and decrease bias. An important implication from our published review was that there is a need for clear guidelines of what an integrative review is, and how it should be performed and reported. Research synthesis is difficult and time consuming. Because an integrative review is considered as actual research, it should be approached following established research methods involving well-defined steps. In this book, we provide the level of detail needed to systematically conduct an integrative review.

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