**Exercise – Chapter 2**

## Exercise 2.1 How systematic is this review?

Disciplines differ in the extent to which they have adopted systematic approaches to research synthesis. Identify a review article within your own subject area or discipline (for example, search for ‘review’, ‘overview’ or ‘meta-analysis’ in the title or abstract). To what extent can your chosen review be described as ‘systematic’? Exercise 2.1 suggests that you construct a grid as in the following example and complete it with your own observations.

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| **1Features that make this review appearSYSTEMATIC** | **2Features that make this review appear NON-SYSTEMATIC** |
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## Exercise 2.2 Identify a systematic review

Identify a systematic review in an area of interest to you and also identify a conventional review in a similar or related topic. Place the two reviews side by side and briefly make a list of the differences between the two reviews.

## Exercise 2.3 How systematic is that review?

Look through the following fictional abstract describing ‘a structured review of the literature’ in light of what you have already learnt regarding the search, appraisal, synthesis, analysis (SALSA) framework. Which elements of this abstract provide evidence of a systematic approach?

### Performing X in Y: A structured review of the literature

#### Abstract

{Two brief sentences of Background}. A literature search was conducted across **{list of Databases and Internet sources}** of studies that evaluated XA. **Information on the type of activity, sample and setting, endpoints, and study design were extracted**. **Studies were classified** based on a modified {Hypothetical Worthy} modelC. Four categories of activity were identified: **actor, decision-support, involvement and systems**C. The search strategy and selection criteria yielded **21 articles**A. Eleven studies used an actor activity; two studies used a decision support activity, seven used an involvement activity, and one used a systems interventionC. The **overall quality of research** was uneven: research design – nine studies were quasi-experimental in nature, endpoint measures were not consistent – three did not perform statistical analysisB. Sample characteristics varied dramaticallyB. In conclusion, **the number of high-quality studies of X remains limited**. **Methodological limitations** include measurement of an inappropriate surrogate measure when measurement of an endpoint would be more validD. **Further research** is needed to understand how each type of activity improves the quality of performing X in a Y settingD.

**[Items indicating a systematic approach highlighted in Bold]**