

**Table: Steps in finding evidence (“Levels”) for different types of question**

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Question	Step 1 (Level 1*)	Step 2 (Level 2*)	Step 3 (Level 3*)	Step 4 (Level 4*)	Step 5 (Level 5)
<b>How common is it?</b> (E.g., Pre-test probabilities)	Most relevant local and current random sample survey (or censuses)	Systematic review of current surveys	Systematic review of local non-random sample	Systematic review of case-series	Opinion without explicit critical appraisal, based on limited/undocumented experience, or based on mechanisms
<b>Is this test accurate?</b> (Diagnostic accuracy)	Systematic review of cross sectional studies	Systematic review of cross sectional studies With consistently applied reference standard and blinding	Systematic review of non-consecutive studies, or studies without consistently applied reference standards.	Systematic review of case-control study, or cross-sectional study with non-independent reference standard	Opinion without explicit critical appraisal, based on limited/undocumented experience, or based on mechanisms
<b>What will happen if we do nothing?</b> (Prognosis)	Systematic review of inception cohort studies	Inception cohort studies	Cohort or control arm of randomized trial	Systematic review of case-series	Opinion without explicit critical appraisal, based on limited/undocumented experience, or based on mechanisms
<b>Does this treatment help?</b> (Treatment Benefits)	Systematic review of randomized trials or <i>n</i> -of-1 trial	Randomized trial or (exceptionally) observational studies with dramatic effect	Non-randomized controlled cohort/follow-up study	Systematic review of case-control studies, historically controlled studies	Opinion without explicit critical appraisal, based on limited/undocumented experience, or based on mechanisms
<b>What are the COMMON harms?</b> (Treatment Harms)	Systematic review of randomized trials or <i>n</i> -of-1 trial	Systematic review of nested case-control or dramatic effect	Non-randomized controlled cohort/follow-up study	Case-control studies, historically controlled studies	Opinion without explicit critical appraisal, based on limited/undocumented experience, or based on mechanisms
<b>What are the RARE harms?</b> (Treatment Harms)	Systematic review of case-control studies, or studies revealing dramatic effects	Randomized trial or (exceptionally) observational study with dramatic effect			
<b>Is early detection worthwhile?</b> (Screening)	Systematic review of randomized trials	Randomized trial	Non-randomized controlled cohort/follow-up study	Case-control studies, historically controlled studies	Opinion without explicit critical appraisal, based on limited/undocumented experience, or based on mechanisms

\* Level may be graded down on the basis of study quality, imprecision, indirectness (study PICO does not match questions PICO), because of inconsistency between studies, or because the absolute effect size is very small; Level may be graded up if there is a large or very large effect size.