



How to use the NCCMT's Search Pyramids

featuring Donna Ciliska (McMaster University) and Jessie McGowan (University of Ottawa).

Introduction

Welcome to the seventh webinar in the Spotlight on KT Methods and Tools series by CHNET-Works! Today's advisors on tap include Jessie McGowan, Adjunct Professor in the Departments of Medicine and Family Medicine at the University of Ottawa, and Donna Ciliska, Professor in the School of Nursing at McMaster University. They will be discussing the Search Pyramid tool from the National Collaborating Centre for Methods and Tools.

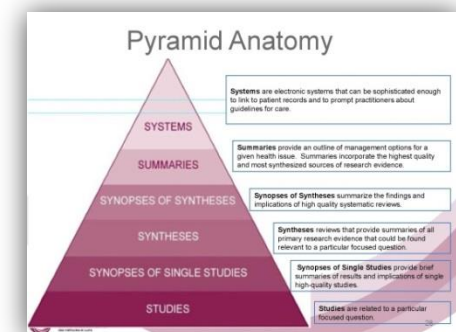
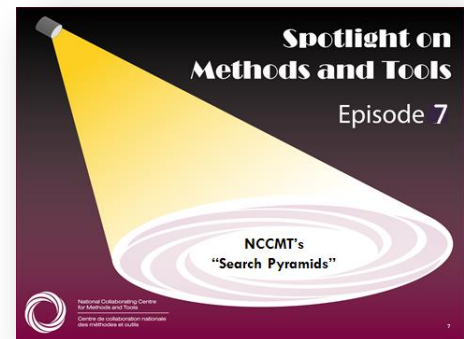
Purpose of the Search Pyramid

The development of the Search Pyramid was spawned by the notion that, while public health practitioners are aware of many resources that contain research, using those resources to find the highest quality evidence in the little time available still remains a challenge. In short, the Search Pyramid was designed to answer the question "How will public health practitioners know what research is reliable, and what is worth using?" As such, the Search Pyramid represents a faster, more efficient way to find high quality research evidence.

What is the Search Pyramid?

The Search Pyramid aims to save time for professionals in public health by connecting them directly to pre-processed, pre-appraised research evidence. In order to facilitate this, the Search Pyramid is based on the 6S Pyramid model, which is a hierarchy of research evidence wherein each level of the pyramid draws on evidence from the lower levels. Therefore, the highest levels of the pyramid contain more synthesized evidence, representing the best place to start a search. The Search Pyramid has harnessed this concept as a way of structuring resources for research evidence for public health practitioners.

In adapting the 6S Pyramid to a tool, the Search Pyramid has populated each level of the pyramid with collections of resources of that level of



Public Health+, which provides users with a relevance rating and newsworthiness rating for each result of a search in addition to critical appraisals.

Limitations of the Search Pyramid

Free access is a fundamental tenet of the Search Pyramid, and this is maintained throughout each level of the tool. Though this ensures that users will never be barred from accessing a resource included in the tool, it also means that many resources are excluded altogether. Additionally, resources included in the Search Pyramid guarantee access only to abstracts; while full text is available for many of the resources included, this is not true for all.

A second limitation of the Search Pyramid is that it does not include customizable search filters as part of the tool. Rather, the tool offers a collection of resources where users must go to administer their own search filters, which means users will still need to develop their searching skills in order to be successful. However, there are plans to integrate search filters into future iterations of the pyramid to streamline this process and allow for increased functionality of the tool.

Additional Features

While an integrated search function is not a component of the Search Pyramid, there have already been steps taken to help make it a user-friendly and focus-specific experience. The Search Pyramid currently exists in seven versions which tailor resources at every level to specific public health topics. With topic areas spanning health communication all the way to healthy habits, these separate versions of the Search Pyramid remove resources that are unlikely to be helpful to users leaving only those whose content fits the topic area.

In addition to topic-specific pyramids, the Search Pyramid allows users to customize the tool to suit their needs, including storing additional resources and notes. By logging in to the NCCMT Learning Centre, users can create and save notes and add additional websites to the Search Pyramid that are only visible when logged in. This is especially valuable for users that may wish to supplement the Search Pyramid with paid resources for which they have a subscription. The goal is to make finding research evidence a fast and efficient process for Public Health Practitioners. The tool is available now, so feel free to log in to the Learning Centre and try it yourself!

