



## Is a new evidence synthesis *really* needed at this time?

To reduce duplication of efforts, we strongly recommend conducting a preliminary search and only proceeding if no **relevant**, **recent**, and **rigorous** reviews are available.

## A Choose a review approach

### Which best describes your situation?

Is the reason for the review:

- To understand the type and volume of evidence available
- To clarify key concepts, definitions, characteristics and/or knowledge gaps
- To determine if an SR is needed/possible (i.e., does enough literature exist)
- To understand emerging evidence and knowledge gaps
- To describe the types of studies that report on a health condition (e.g., prevalence, intervention characteristics, etc.)

**Scoping review**

OR

Is the reason for the review:

- To identify the best available evidence to guide decision-making
- To understand conflicting evidence or identify new evidence
- To report the specific findings from studies on a health condition (e.g., prevalence, effectiveness, etc.)

**Systematic review**

OR

**Neither of these applies to my situation.**

Although these are the most common types of evidence synthesis, they may not be appropriate for all types of evidence.

- Distinct approaches may apply when working with Indigenous knowledge.
- A critical interpretive synthesis is a type of evidence synthesis that is oriented toward theory building. It combines systematic review methodology and qualitative research inquiry.
- A realist review is another type of evidence synthesis that seeks to understand how and why an intervention worked.

As these approaches may require more resources and specific expertise, they should be conducted by a team with appropriate experience. For more information, see: <https://www.nccmt.ca>.

## B Assess for *variations* on the review type

### Do any of the following apply to your situation?

#### Rapid



The review is needed **as soon as possible**, with the understanding that this may require methodological shortcuts that may reduce the trustworthiness of the findings.

AND/OR

#### Umbrella



Based on a preliminary literature search, many reviews exist but none adequately address the research question.

Note: This may only be apparent once the review team starts searching.

AND/OR

#### Living



This is a rapidly changing topic with new evidence emerging regularly. Updates may be needed in the short- or medium-term.

Note: You may find that none of these apply.

## C Type of review

Your review type is:

**A**

**Review approach**

+

**B**

**Variation(s)**

e.g., **Systematic** review

**Rapid scoping** review

**Umbrella systematic** review

**Living rapid systematic** review