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FURTHER EDUCATION | WORKSHOP

Evidence Synthesis in Research: Conducting Systematic Reviews

Instructor: Dr Liliana Abreu, University of Constance

Date & Time: 04 June 2025, 9.00 a.m. to 3.00 p.m. (s.t.)

Place: BAGSS, Feldkirchenstraße 21, 96050 Bamberg, Room FG1/00.06

Registration: To register, please send an email to courses.bagss@uni-bamberg.de by Wednesday, May 14, 2025. Registration is mandatory. The number of participants is limited to 16.

Short Outline

This intensive 8-hour (6hrs in person + 2hrs asynchronous) course provides a comprehensive grounding in planning, conducting and reporting systematic literature reviews - an essential research method for synthesizing evidence in health sciences, social sciences and other fields. Designed for early career researchers, graduate students and professionals, the course combines lectures, interactive discussions and practical activities to ensure that participants gain both theoretical knowledge and practical expertise.

Participants will explore each step of the systematic review process, starting with the development of clear research questions using frameworks such as PICO, SPIDER or PCC. The course then moves on to creating robust and replicable search strategies, making effective use of Boolean operators and academic databases to ensure comprehensive coverage of the literature. Emphasis is placed on screening and selecting relevant studies using inclusion/exclusion criteria, systematically extracting and managing data, and critically appraising study quality.

The course also introduces participants to qualitative and quantitative synthesis techniques, including thematic synthesis and meta-analysis, with an emphasis on the interpretation and reporting of results according to PRISMA guidelines. Finally, the course also provides strategies for addressing common challenges such as publication bias, heterogeneity and methodological limitations to ensure high quality and impactful reviews.

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Topics covered:

- Understanding the meaning and process of systematic reviews
- Formulating clear research questions and inclusion/exclusion criteria using several frameworks
- Developing comprehensive search strategies across multiple databases
- Writing a detailed systematic review protocol
- Knowledge on how to register a systematic review protocol with appropriate registries (eg. Prospero, OSF)
- Screening and selection of relevant studies using defined criteria
- Extract and synthesise data from selected studies
- Critically appraise the quality of included studies using standardised tools
- Interpret and present the results of a systematic review
- Write a systematic review report according to PRISMA guidelines
- Introduction to AI-assisted systematic reviews using the innovative ASreview software, equipping participants with cutting-edge tools to improve efficiency and accuracy.

Prerequisites

- Engage with 120 minutes of asynchronous materials, which may include recorded lectures, readings and interactive content.
- Actively participate in a 4hrs synchronous laboratory session that includes hands-on exercises and discussions.
- Participate 60 minutes to independent learning activities in small groups, focusing on practical applications of course concepts.
- Optionally attend a 60-minute office hour for personalised feedback and support.

About the Trainer

Dr Liliana Abreu is a postdoctoral researcher in the Development Research Group at the Department of Politics and Public Administration, University of Konstanz (Germany), where she has been working since 2019 doing research, teaching and supervising thesis. She holds a doctorate in Public Health from the University of Porto's Medical School, Portugal. Her research integrates scientific investigation and humanitarian work, focusing on the prevention of violence against children, women and vulnerable populations. She is committed to implementing sustainable mental health interventions, with a particular focus on trauma, gender equality and mental health literacy. Liliana has extensive experience in designing and evaluating complex public health interventions using rigorous research methods. She is also deeply passionate about rigorous research, the principles of open science and creating meaningful, positive impact through her work.

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