



## **REVIEW METHODS: WE CANNOT TRIVIALIZE THEM**

As an editorial board member and/or ad hoc consultant for journals, we perform screening or assessment of review articles and we are constantly faced with inadequacies on the classification of review methods. Therefore, the need to clarify the origin and the scientific rigor of review methods.

Review methods are important tools of Evidence-Based Practice (EBP) consisting of a problem-solving approach to provide health care that integrates the best evidence derived from well-designed studies and patient care data, combining them with patient's preferences and values, and expertise of healthcare professionals<sup>(1)</sup>.

The review method is carried out based on a research question, clearly designed and guided by explicit methods in order to identify, analyze and summarize the pertinent literature, often aiming to contribute to the EBP. The review methods supported by accuracy and repeatability standards, and commonly classified in the nursing literature are: systematic review, meta-analysis, integrative review and systematic review of qualitative researches (e.g., meta-synthesis)<sup>(2)</sup>.

In this editorial, we highlight two review methods: the systematic review and integrative review. The systematic review originated in Evidence-Based Medicine. This method includes a comprehensive and thorough search of primary studies on a clinical issue, selection of studies using clear and reproducible criteria, critical assessment of study quality, and synthesis of results according to a predetermined and explicit method<sup>(3)</sup>. Usually, the systematic review focuses on questions about the effect of health interventions, with the inclusion of primary studies developed with a single research design (randomized controlled trial). The meta-analysis consists in the use of statistical techniques that integrate the results of the primary studies included in the review<sup>(4)</sup>.

The integrative review is also a review method used in EBP that enables incorporating evidences into clinical practice; however, it originated in 1982, when Cooper (a renowned researcher from Duke University, USA) introduced the Scientific guidelines for conducting this review method. The integrative review was introduced in nursing by Ganong in 1987<sup>(2)</sup>.

The development of integrative reviews may have different purposes, namely: to define concepts, examine theories, review evidences, and analyze methodological issues about a particular topic. It is the most comprehensive review method and can include primary studies carried out with different research designs<sup>(5)</sup>. This method allows the search, critical assessment and synthesis of evidences available on the research topic, and its final product is the current state of knowledge on the topic of interest, as well as the identification of gaps for the development of future researches<sup>(6)</sup>.

In conducting review methods, the researcher must go through all the steps recommended in the literature, which ensure the methodological rigor required to develop such researches. The results found in reviews can help nurses in the decision making process in clinical practice and consequently improve the nursing care.

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