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First experiences as a Best Evidence Medical Education reviewer- what’s it really like?
Julie Williams*, School of Oral and Dental Sciences, University of Bristol

Meeting 1 Questions
1. What are the strengths of each member of the team? Decide on roles.
2. Refine research question following scoping search—what are the inclusion and exclusion criteria? Decide on sources to search and draft coding sheet.
3. What is the timetable for the review?

Meeting 2 Questions
1. What modifications need to be made to the coding sheet?
2. How are you going to share the papers and coding results?
3. How are you going to grade the evidence?

Meeting 3 Questions
1. How are you going to accommodate different views on coding the evidence?
2. How are you planning to synthesise the evidence?
3. What are your team’s recommendations from the review?

Review team
Ideally join a BEME team as a reviewer to learn the process. As you discuss your planned research question, develop your own review group - you need a friendly librarian with systematic review experience and 4 or 5 team players who are experienced in the topic and will be able to attend 3-4 meetings. Reviewers need to commit several hours to reading and coding each batch of papers to meet deadlines.

BEME-The highest-standard, peer-reviewed reports of evidence available relating to medical and health professions education

Undertaking a BEME review is academically stimulating and interesting but also highly challenging, even with the support of an experienced inter-professional team.

Experience
Recent experiences as a reviewer and as a group leader have informed this presentation.

Aim
Spending time developing the research question with anyone who will discuss it with you—students, teachers, clinicians, healthcare professionals—your review answers your research question—so what? What will change?

References

Literature review
Scoping search with librarian support

Topic
Leading a review is going to occupy 8-10 hours per week for at least 18 months—so make sure you are interested in the results! If it is the process you are keen to try there are some suggested topics on the BEME web page but we would recommend developing a research question from your own educational experiences.