Thank you for your attention!
Searching for evidence
Scenario

A 47 year old woman comes to see you. She is overweight, concerned about her overall health, and would like to lose weight quickly. She heard a report on the radio suggesting that resistant corn or potato starch can reduce obesity. You decide to search for evidence.
Step 1: PICO

Use the PICO framework to turn a clinical scenario into a specific, answerable question.

- **P** Who or what is your patient or population group?
- **I** What is your intervention or indicator?
- **C** What is your comparison or control?
- **O** What outcome are you looking for?
An answerable clinical question: In P, is I compared to C effective in achieving O?

For this scenario an answerable question could be: In [P] an overweight 47 year old woman, is [I] resistant starch compared with [C] ordinary starch effective in achieving [O] weight loss?
Step 2: Translate your question into a search strategy

- treat each component as a separate concept
- think of synonyms and alternative spellings and terminology for each concept - link these with OR to broaden your search
- combine your concepts with AND to focus your search
For example:

P overweight OR obese

AND

I resistant starch OR R.S.

AND

C ordinary starch

AND

O weight loss
Tip

When you search a database, combine the most relevant components— you don't need to use all four in a single search.

For example, you could conduct a search using P and I and C, or P and I.
Step 3. Searching

To answer clinical questions, start searching resources that are appraised and summarised (at the top of the EBM Pyramid - see next slide) and work your way down until you find an answer.

Generally the most recent studies will be found in databases (at the bottom), such as in PubMed, as the synthesising, appraising and summarising takes time.
What is considered evidence and where can you find it?

- **SYSTEMS**: Computerised decision support
- **SUMMARIES**: Evidence based textbooks, evidence based clinical guidelines
- **SYNOPSIS OF SYNTHESIS**: Brief summaries of systematic reviews
- **SYNTHESIS**: Systematic reviews
- **SYNOPSIS OF STUDIES**: Brief summaries of individual studies
- **STUDIES**: Original journal articles including randomised controlled trials

**Not held by Monash University Library. Available at selected affiliated hospitals.**

Conclusion

And one more thing...
For more information see the other resources on the Library Guide.

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