Thank you for your attention!
Searching for evidence
Scenario

A 41 year old woman has been referred by her GP to your department for a CT scan. The doctor suspects appendicitis and would like confirmation of diagnosis. As the patient is being prepared, she asks you whether it’s the best test, given the risks of radiation exposure. Would an ultrasound be as good?
Step 1: PICO

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

P  Who or what is your patient, problem or population?
I  What is your intervention, diagnostic test or prognostic factor?
C  What is your comparison or control?
O  What outcome are you looking for?
An answerable clinical question

An answerable question: In P, is I compared to C as accurate in diagnosing O?

For this scenario an answerable question could be: In [P] a 41-year-old woman with abdominal pain, is [I] a CT scan more accurate than [C] an ultrasound in diagnosing [O] appendicitis?
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 abdominal pain
AND
I computed tomography OR CT
AND
C ultrasound OR ultrasonography OR USS
AND
O appendicitis
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?

- **STUDIES**
  - Original journal articles including randomised controlled trials

- **SYNTHESIS**
  - Systematic reviews

- **SYNOPSIS OF STUDIES**
  - Brief summaries of individual studies

- **SYNOPSIS OF SYNTHESIS**
  - Brief summaries of systematic reviews

- **SUMMATION**
  - Evidence based textbooks, evidence based clinical guidelines

- **SYSTEMS**
  - Computerised decision support

- **Best Practice Dynamed**
  - **UpToDate**

- **Ovid Medline Pubmed Embase**

- **ACP Journal Club**

- **Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews**

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**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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