


The scale of assessment of methodologically heterogeneous articles for integrative reviews

Editorial

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Highlights

- The scale was generated in response to the growing need to ensure the quality of results in integrative reviews.
- The proposal contributes to the achievement of the plethoric rigor that a researcher must have in his or her scrutiny.
- The application of the scale to the articles evaluated could improve the quality of the sample.
- The fact that an article has met the inclusion and exclusion criteria defined by a researcher does not mean that it is ideal for the analysis of the results.

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The Scale of Assessment of Methodologically Heterogeneous Articles for Integrative Reviews (EAMH, for its acronym in Spanish)¹ was recently published. This scale was developed in response to the growing need to ensure the quality of results in integrative reviews. The proposal provides guidelines on basic criteria that any article must meet to be included in the analysis of the results.

The scale has six yes/no evaluation questions. Each "YES" answer scores one point; therefore, the scale score ranges from zero to six points and is interpreted as follows: From 0 to 3 points "article not recommended for analysis"; from 4 to 5 points "article suitable for analysis," and, finally, 6 points "article ideal for analysis." The results of applying this scale to analyze articles published in *Cuidarte* journal between 2021 and April 2022 will be presented below (see [Table 1](#)). The database was stored in Mendeley Data².

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Table 1. Analysis according to the EAMH scale for integrative reviews published in Cuidarte journal between 2021 and 2022

Analyzed articles	Citations used as sample	Articles used as a sample and classified according to the categories from the EAMH scale			Not retrieved research
		0-3 points	4-5 points	6 points	
9 ³⁻¹¹	223	30	18	165	10

After analysis, 13.4% (n=30) of the articles used as a sample in the reviews analyzed³⁻¹¹ scored from 0 to 3 points; this classification corresponds to “articles not recommended for analysis” since they failed to meet most of the elements evaluated by the questions contained in the scale. It should be noted that none of the articles used as a sample applied quality criteria in their respective samples; rather, level-of-evidence classifications, clinical questions, or Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASPe) checklists were used.

The results indicate that applying the scale for assessing articles could improve the quality of the sample in integrative reviews. This scale is considered by its author as a proposal that contributes to achieving the full rigor that researchers should apply when scrutinizing articles. This document does not intend to criticize or question other colleagues’ works, especially when they have passed a review stage, but rather to contribute to the thoroughness that the process deserves, highlighting the importance of analyzing the quality of the articles selected in a review.

The fact that an article has met the inclusion and exclusion criteria defined by a researcher does not mean that it is ideal for the analysis of the results unless its quality is considered. Many articles may have shortcomings in reporting objectives and methodologies; discordance between objective and methodology; lack of justification of the number and type of the sample; lack of information on how the sample was accessed; and the results or conclusions may not respond to the stated objective. In such a scenario, making this error could lead to biased results in a review. In turn, these results can be used by the scientific community and be replicated, creating a vicious circle that undermines scientific rigor. This is where the need to use means to remedy those elements that undermine the quality of the results arises.

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