

## Evidence-Based Practice Glossary\*

### **Case-control study**

A study which involves identifying patients who have the outcome of interest (cases) and patients without the same outcome (controls), and looking back to see if they had the exposure of interest.

### **Case series**

A report on a series of patients with an outcome of interest. No control group is involved.

### **Clinical Practice Guideline**

A systematically developed statement designed to assist clinician and patient decisions about appropriate health care for specific clinical circumstances.

### **Clinical trial**

An intervention, such as a drug treatment, is offered to a group of patients who are then followed up to see what happens to them.

### **Cohort Study**

A study that involves identification of two groups (cohorts) of patients, one which received the exposure of interest and one which did not, and following these cohorts forward for the outcome of interest.

### **Crossover study design**

The administration of two or more experimental therapies one after the other in a specified or random order to the same group of patients.

### **Cross-sectional study**

The observation of a defined population at a single point in time or time interval. Exposure and outcome are determined simultaneously.

### **Double blind design**

A research design where subjects and investigators do not know which intervention they are receiving or administering.

### **Evidence-based practice (EBP)**

The conscientious, explicit and judicious use of current best evidence in making decisions about the care of individual patients. Evidence-based practice requires the integration of individual clinical expertise with the best available external clinical evidence from systematic research and our patient's unique values and circumstances.

**Factorial design**

A study that permits investigation of the effects (both separately and combined) of more than one independent variable on a given outcome (for example, a 2x2 factorial design tested the effects of placebo, aspirin alone, streptokinase alone, or aspirin plus streptokinase in acute heart attack).

**Meta-analysis**

A systematic review that uses quantitative methods to synthesize and summarize the results of multiple studies.

**Paired (or matched) comparison**

A comparison where subjects receiving different treatments are matched to balance potential confounding variables such as age and sex. Results are analyzed in terms of differences between subject pairs.

**Parallel group comparison**

A comparison where each group receives a different treatment, with both groups being entered at the same time; results are analyzed by comparing groups.

**Placebo controlled**

A study where control subjects receive a placebo (inactive pill) which should look and taste the same as the active pill. Placebo (sham) operations may also be used in trials of surgery.

**Randomization (or random allocation)**

A method analogous to tossing a coin to assign patients to treatment groups (the experimental treatment is assigned if the coin lands “heads” and a conventional, “control” or “placebo” treatment is given if the coin lands “tails”).

**Randomized control clinical trial (RCT)**

Participants are randomly allocated into an experimental group or a control group and followed over time for the variables/outcomes of interest.

**Single blind clinical trial**

A trial where subjects in the study did not know which treatment they were receiving.

**Systematic review**

A summary of the medical literature that uses explicit methods to perform a comprehensive literature search and critical appraisal of individual studies and that uses appropriate statistical techniques to combine these valid studies.

**Within subject comparison**

Subjects are assessed before and after an intervention and results analyzed in terms of changes within the subjects.

*\*University Health Network. Center for Evidence-Based Medicine. (2004) Retrieved September 22, 2004 from <http://www.cebm.utoronto.ca/glossary/>*