

The Savvy Practitioner

A bulletin for practitioners and teachers of evidence-based practice.

“Many learners may be better served by teachers who assist them in finding answers by raising salient questions that can be answered with evidence.”

Target audience this issue:

- ✓ Classroom faculty
- ✓ Clinicians
- ✓ Faculty in general
- ✓ EIP core instructors

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PEDro: A Good Source of Pre-Appraised Literature

The Physiotherapy Evidence Database (PEDro) covers over 18,000 clinical trials (usually RCTs), systematic reviews & clinical practice guidelines. All individual studies are *pre-appraised* and rated for quality. Each citation has an abstract and individual trials have a 10 point quality score and a checklist breakdown of strengths and weaknesses. Generally a score below 6 would reflect a considerable threat to the validity of the study and its conclusions.

| | Method | Score (/10) | Select Record |
|------------------------|-------------------|-------------|---------------|
| | systematic review | N/A | Select |
| review | systematic review | N/A | Select |
| bc | clinical trial | 10/10 | Select |
| | clinical trial | 9/10 | Select |
| ain | clinical trial | 7/10 | Select |

When doing a search for topics such as exercise therapy, massage and manual therapy, and physical therapy modalities, a combined search through PEDro, PubMed, and the Cochrane data base may be the quickest and most thorough combination of data bases to explore. Both PubMed and PEDro are free, open access sources available to everyone. PEDro also offers a *push service* which will send you an e-mail alert indicating what new research has been added to the data base each month.

What PEDro can do for you:

- Keep you up on new *therapy* studies in the health care areas indicated above.
- Provide a quick, user friendly way of finding research evidence along with a rating of its general quality.

What PEDro can't do for you:

- Provide the entire article.
- Provide general information articles.
- Provide evidence on nutrition, diagnosis, risk or topics outside the neuromusculoskeletal realm.
- Provide information on *case series*, *cohort*, *case control* or other types of trials.

Help your students understand how to use pre-appraised literature and where they can find good sources.

Top 6 Ways to Use PEDro

1. **Keeping up.** You are a supervising clinician or classroom faculty and you don't have either the time or (*currently*) the skills to assess the papers yourself. Consider signing up to have new studies pushed to you.
2. **Improving your own assessment skills.** Look carefully at the itemized quality scores for a particular paper and slowly start learning about each one and how much of a threat each is to the validity of the paper. Want to know more? Go to the Educator's Exchange.
3. **Making students aware.** You teach a physical therapy course, massage/manual therapy/ manipulation course or exercise course and you want to share good sources of *pre-appraised* literature with your students so that they can access them after graduation. Do a short presentation on PEDro or, better, give students a short assignment which requires them to use PEDro.
4. **Using & critiquing the PEDro scoring model.** You teach an information literacy or EIP core course, and wish to include PEDro.
1) After doing an in-class checklist assessment of a study, have students compare their assessment with PEDro's checklist, 2) discuss the limitations of scoring systems like PEDros which weigh each item equally—should some items like *concealed allocation* or *intention to treat* analysis receive more weight?, 3) discuss what the abstract and quality score leaves out that you might be important to know, 4) discuss the limitation of PEDro not assessing the quality of the systematic reviews or guidelines themselves that are included.
5. **Patient Application.** You are a clinical supervisor and wish to promote a behavior where interns regularly check the literature relative to patient care. 1) Assign interns to search PEDro (as well as other data bases) regarding a particular patient, 2) have them search a generic clinical intervention to see what's new, 3) have them sign up for the PEDro push service for a term, 4) have them incorporate the results of literature searches into grand rounds or case presentations.
6. **Planning and sequencing an EIP curriculum.** You have an administrative role in institution-wide curricular planning and sequencing. Include lessons on using PEDro about the time that students are taking courses related to musculoskeletal management so that they see the relevance and value. PEDro (and other pre-appraised literature sources) can be introduced even before students start to learn how to assess studies for themselves.

Want to Know More?

For more on assessing the quality of an RCT, go to the *Educator's Exchange*, click through the following webpages: [EIP Resources](#) | [Primary Literature Assessment](#) | [Therapy](#) and download [ABCDFIX: An Approach to Assessing an RCT](#).

For more on pre-appraised literature in general, go to the *Educator's Exchange*, click through the following webpages: [EIP Resources](#) | [Pre-appraised Literature](#).

Haven't signed up to get your username and password for the Educator's Exchange yet? Contact rlefebvre@uws.edu.