PICO METHOD
PICO IS A TOOL USED IN EVIDENCE BASED MEDICINE THAT HELPS YOU FORMULATE A MORE PRECISE RESEARCH QUESTION AND KNOW WHERE TO LOOK FOR ANSWERS.
What does PICO stand for?

- **P = Population/Patient/Problem:** How would you describe the population you are interested in studying? How would you describe a group of patients similar to yours? What is the central problem?

- **I = Intervention:** What main intervention are you considering? What do you want to do with this population/patient?

- **C = Comparison:** What is the main alternative being considered, if any?

- **O = Outcome:** What are you trying to accomplish, measure, improve, or affect?
A 30-year old man is diagnosed with depression and prefers to use herbal medicine to treat his symptoms. You believe an SSRI (antidepressant) would be more effective and want to give him a comparison of the two.

- **P:** Depression
- **I:** SSRI (antidepressants)
- **C:** St John’s Wort
- **O:** Reduce Depressive Symptoms

**Question:** Is St John’s Wort as effective as SSRI in reducing depressive symptoms for someone with depression?
PICO Example 2: Vasectomy & Testicular Cancer

A patient wants to discuss the possibility of a vasectomy. He says he has heard that having a vasectomy can increase the chances for testicular cancer later in life. You know that the risk of this is low, but want to give him a more precise answer.

- **P:** Adult Males
- **I:** Vasectomy
- **C:** No Vasectomy
- **O:** Testicular Cancer

**Question:** In men, does having a vasectomy (compared to not having one) increase the risk of getting testicular cancer in the future?
PICO Example 3: Smoking Reduction

The Health Promotion Division is working with community based organizations in the Bay Area to reduce smoking in the 50+ population. Following the success of similar measures around the country, a smoke free law begins in the Bay Area this January. Is there evidence that law would be sufficient to reduce older adult smoking?

- **P:** Smokers over age 50 in the Bay Area
- **I:** Smoke free law
- **C:** No smoke free law
- **O:** Reduction in smoking

**Question:** In older adult smokers, will implementing a smoke free law reduce smoking?
What type of results do you need?
St John’s wort for major depression

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ABSTRACT

Background
In some countries extracts of the plant Hypericum perforatum L. (popularly called St John’s wort) are widely used for treating patients with depressive symptoms.

Objectives
To investigate whether extracts of hypericum are more effective than placebo and as effective as standard antidepressants in the treatment of major depression; and whether they have fewer adverse effects than standard antidepressant drugs.

Search methods
Trials were searched in computerised databases, by checking bibliographies of relevant articles, and by contacting manufacturers and researchers.

Selection criteria
Trials were included if they: (1) were randomised and double-blind; (2) included patients with major depression; (3) compared extracts of St John’s wort with placebo or standard antidepressants; (4) included clinical outcomes assessing depressive symptoms.

Data collection and analysis
At least two independent reviewers extracted information from study reports. The main outcome measure for assessing effectiveness...
How will you ask – Boolean Operators

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<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>AND</strong></th>
<th><strong>OR</strong></th>
<th><strong>NOT</strong></th>
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<td>Your search will retrieve resources that contain <strong>at least one</strong> of these words. This will <strong>BROADEN</strong> your search and <strong>INCREASE</strong> search results.</td>
<td>Type <strong>NOT</strong> before a keyword to <strong>exclude</strong> that word from your search. This will <strong>NARROW</strong> your search and <strong>DECREASE</strong> search results.</td>
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<th>Public Health NOT Smoking</th>
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PICO Example 1
Depression Treatment

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**Question:** Is St John’s Wort as effective as SSRI in reducing depressive symptoms for someone with depression?
## How will you ask - Keywords vs Subjects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Keyword</th>
<th>Subject (Academic Search Complete Database)</th>
<th>Subject (PubMed Database)</th>
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<td>Myocardial Infarction</td>
<td>Myocardial Infarction</td>
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<td>Opioid Abuse AND Drug Addiction</td>
<td>Opioid-Related Disorders</td>
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<tr>
<td>LGBTQ</td>
<td>LGBT</td>
<td>Homosexuality AND Bisexuality AND Transgender People</td>
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</tbody>
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Where will you look (databases)?
LIBRARY WEBSITE & DATABASES
How to get individual help

Library Reference Desk
1st Floor of Library (Hayward)
Circulation Desk (Concord)

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