

Spotlight

Keeping up to date with information retrieval research: Summarised Research in Information Retrieval for HTA (SuRe Info)

Increasing numbers of studies about information retrieval to produce systematic reviews, health technology assessments and other evidence syntheses are being published. It is time-consuming and demanding for information specialists and others working with information retrieval to keep current on the latest developments in the field.

SuRe Info¹ is an open access web resource that provides overviews of current research evidence for major issues in information retrieval for evidence syntheses. It is published as a part of an already existing web resource, the HTAi Vortal², that seeks to collect and make available in one place information of interest regarding health technology assessment. SuRe Info is produced by experienced information specialists mainly from within the Interest Group on Information Retrieval (IRG) of Health Technology Assessment international (HTAi)³, who volunteer their time and expertise to keep the overviews current.

SuRe Info comprises two sections:

1. information on general search methods that are common across all health technologies;
2. methods to use when searching for specific aspects of health technologies.

Within both sections there are chapters summarising the current research evidence. The first section is divided into chapters concerning which sources to search, how to design search strategies, using search filters, peer reviewing of search strategies, and how to document and report the search process.

The second section is mainly based on the structure of the HTA Core Model⁴, a model developed by the European Network for Health Technology Assessment (EUnetHTA)⁵ that provides a framework for producing and sharing results of health technology assessments. This section contains 11 chapters, eight of them completed and three in preparation:

- health problem and current use of health technology;
- description and characteristics of health technology;
- safety;
- diagnostic accuracy;
- clinical effectiveness;
- costs and economic evaluation;
- ethical analysis;
- organisational aspects;
- social aspects;
- legal aspects;
- qualitative research.

Chapters are created by running topic-specific search strategies in selected relevant databases and gathering information from other sources. Publications fulfilling the SuRe Info inclusion criteria then receive a structured abstract containing a brief

critical appraisal (“publication appraisal”). Key messages from the appraisals are summarised into topic-specific chapters. Bibliographies of included studies are provided at the end of each chapter as well as links to the full text of the articles, if they are freely available. The chapters are reviewed twice a year and updated if new research evidence is available.

SuRe Info offers information on general searching issues such as how to structure the search, selecting and combining search terms, and applying date and language limits. For specific topics such as identifying cost-effectiveness and economic evaluations, information on which sources to search and how to design search strategies on the topic in hand can be found.

Over time, many organisations producing evidence syntheses have developed their own policies with respect to information retrieval and management. SuRe Info is not a substitute for methods handbooks and does not replace the search policies of organisations, but it does provide content which can be used when creating and updating the search guidance in such handbooks. It is not a comprehensive bibliography of all the published research evidence within information retrieval since it focuses on health technology assessment issues. However, by providing an overview of current research evidence for major issues in information retrieval in HTA, SuRe Info helps searchers in this field to keep current with the latest developments and offers research-based information about everyday searching issues.

Access SuRe Info at <http://www.sure-info.org>

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References

- ¹ Summarized Research in Information Retrieval for HTA (SuRe Info). Available from: <http://www.sure-info.org> [Accessed 28th July 2017]
- ² HTAi Vortal. Available from: <http://vortal.htai.org> [Accessed 28th July 2017]
- ³ HTAi Interest Group on Information Retrieval. Available from: <http://www.htai.org/interest-groups/information-retrieval.html> [Accessed 28th July 2017]
- ⁴ HTA Core Model® online. Available from: <http://www.corehta.info> [Accessed 28th July 2017]
- ⁵ European Network for Health Technology Assessment EUnetHTA. Available from: <http://www.eunetha.eu> [Accessed 28th July 2017]
