

Healthcare Information & Decision Equation: Information → Decision → Action → Outcome
Is it true → Is it useful → Is it usable?

Auditing a Secondary Study or Secondary Source

It is important to critically appraise all secondary studies and secondary sources for how well they have been done, but it is also important to critically appraise or audit the science upon which the study or source is based.

Conservative Approach

- Critically appraise all studies utilized in the secondary study or source.

Minimal Approach (risky)

- One or two of included primary studies considered to be of the **highest quality** are critically appraised for validity and usefulness.

In either event—

- If the source passes for validity and usefulness, it may be reasonable to use the source's efficacy and safety conclusions in the evidence synthesis.
- If the source fails for validity and usefulness, but has utilized a **sound search strategy** and sound criteria for **excluding efficacy studies** lacking relevance, validity or for other problems, **all the primary studies** selected for inclusion by the source are **critically appraised**.

In all cases—

- **Update** with any new valid and clinically useful primary studies published since the date of the secondary source's search