

Randomised controlled trial (RCT)

2 or more groups, random allocation

Possible participants randomly
allocated to either

Intervention group

Control group

Controlled clinical trial (CCT)

As for a RCT but the allocation was quasi-random (eg. alternation, date of birth, patient identifier)

Possible participants quasi-randomly
allocated to either

Intervention group

Control group

Controlled before and after study (CBA)

3 or more groups but allocation to control or intervention was not random, and there are at least 2 control groups.

Possible participants
non-randomly allocated
to either

Intervention group =
one or more than one
group

Control group – must
be more than one
group

Control group = must
be more than one
group

Note: EPOC has recently changed the policy about inclusion of CBA studies with only one intervention site. Specific details about design criteria can be found at the website (www.epoc.cochrane.org)

Interrupted time series (ITS)

For assessing a trend over time. No control group but must have a clear point in time that intervention was introduced, plus 3 data points before and after the intervention.

Time 1

Time 2

Time 3

Intervention introduced

Time 4

Time 5

Time 6

If none of these designs then paper is EXCLUDED.