

Search of CINAHL, PubMed and Scopus data-bases
Key words: “low back pain”; and “classification” or “subgroup”; and “physical therapy” or “physiotherapy”
Papers identified: 3, 281 (CINAHL), 1,912 (PubMed) and 6 (Scopus)

Removal of duplicate reports; elimination of papers that did not include a LBP classification system
(48 relevant papers)

Review of abstracts by 2 independent appraisers
28 methods/schemes to subgroup patients identified

Review of each method against operational criteria: identified 5 classification schemes described in 39 papers

Mechanical Diagnosis and Treatment → 7 papers

Movement System Impairment Classification → 7 papers

Pathoanatomic Based Classification → 2 papers

O’Sullivan Classification System → 7 papers

Treatment Based Classification → 16 papers

Review of studies of reliability for all methods
Results tabulated

Individualised survey developed for experts/developers of each method to:

- (i) Clarify assessment philosophy and decision-making algorithms;
- (ii) Clarify completeness of intertester reliability evaluation;
- (iii) Confirm inclusion of all key articles related to the respective schemes;
- (iv) Determine extent of incorporation of other domains within the bio-psycho-social framework in the scheme

Preparation of report and confirmation from developers/experts regarding accuracy of content

Final revisions based on feedback from developers/experts