

Evidence-based medicine

What is Evidence-based medicine?

Evidence-based medicine (EBM) is the process of systematically reviewing, appraising, and using clinical research findings to aid the delivery of optimum clinical care to patients. Patient knowledge of evidence-based medicine is important because it enables them to make more informed decisions about disease management and treatment. It also gives patients a more accurate perception of risk, encourages appropriate use of elective procedures and supports evidence-based doctor/patient decision-making.

Evidence-based medicine is a combination of principles and methods. When put into action, these ensure that medical decisions, guidelines, and policies are based on the **current best evidence** about the effects of different forms of treatment and healthcare in general. With respect to medicines, it draws heavily on information from the benefit and risk (efficacy and safety) evaluation.

The concept of evidence-based medicine emerged in the 1950s. Before then, medical decisions were mainly based on medical training, clinical experience, and journal reading. However, studies showed that medical treatment decisions differed significantly between individual healthcare professionals. The basis was formed for implementing systematic methods to collect, evaluate, and organise research data – which lead to evidence-based medicine. Since its implementation, evidence-based medicine has been recognised by doctors, pharmaceutical companies, regulatory authorities, and the general public. The decision-maker needs to look at knowledge from their own clinical experience along with the best evidence from controlled studies and research. Combining clinical experience and controlled studies in the decision-making process is important. Without clinical experience, the risk related to a given treatment may end up causing unwanted effects.

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